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IN TWO VOLUMES,

VOL. I.

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AUSTIN ELLIOT.

CHAPTER I.

IT so happened that, in the early spring of the year 1789, three young men, each equally full of health, hope, honour, courage, and curiosity, separated at the gates of Christ Church College, Oxford, to pursue divergent paths across that world, which at that time seemed, to those three, only a sunny fairy-land lying betwixt them and the grave—only some enchanted land full of glorious adventures, and they three young knights ready to achieve them.

To one of the three—the youngest and the most famous, by name Jenkinson—we shall only allude incidentally. With regard to the other two, George

Hilton and James Elliot, we shall have to be a little more explicit.

George Hilton, the handsomer and cleverer of the two, went abroad, and, having met his friend Jenkinson at the storming of the Bastile, came home again in September, bringing with him a lovely, fragile, little being of a French wife, a daughter of the Duc de Mazagan, who had been pleased that his daughter should marry this fine young English merchant, and be out of the way of those troubles, which he saw gathering so darkly, and so swiftly, over the head of his devoted order.

He could not foresee that she would be dead before Christmas ; still less, that in the Conciergerie and on the guillotine, he should rejoice that there was one loving heart the less to mourn for him. But so it was : the poor gentle, happy, loving little creature died in her husband's arms, almost before that husband knew how well he loved her. The grand old Duke made his last bow, when he took precedence of his old friend the Marquis de Varly, on the scaffold, looked at the sovereign people through an eye-glass, shrugged his shoulders with infinite contempt, and died. The gallant young Vicomte Tourbillon, who should have been duke—George's

dear friend—yielded to circumstances, and entered the Republican army ; and George Hilton, disgusted with the world, from sheer want of anything to do or care about, plunged headlong into commerce.

Bringing apparently a keen, clear head, a reckless courage, and a vigilance which slept not by day or by night, to the assistance of his father's house, he tided that house successfully through those terrible revolutionary years, and raised it at last to be one of the great commercial houses in England. From very shortly after he assumed his place as an active unit in the firm, his father and his father's old partner submitted to him ; and from that time these two terrified old men, found themselves dragged (if one may use such an expression) by the heels through a seething whirlpool of audacious speculation, powerless and hopeless, only to emerge again, with wealth and credit such as they had never dreamt of, before this valiant, gloomy young man had joined them. There might be terror on 'Change, or panic in Lombard Street ; but though these two might sit cowering in their chairs, fluttering papers which they scarcely understood, in their trembling fingers, yet there was always one figure before them, in which they felt forced to trust, the figure of George Hilton—the

figure of a tall, handsome man in dark clothes, with a set austere face, who rarely spoke, into whose eyes they gazed with a look of awe, and a look of supplication painful to witness. Always kind, he was always undemonstrative, and they looked up to him as some god who held their fate in his hands.

Once he broke out. When an old clerk came into the room where they sat, and, with a face only more ashy pale than their own, told them the terrible disaster of Austerlitz, the two old men fell to feebly wailing; but the younger, leaping from his chair, gave a wild hurrah, which made the respectable old ledgers on the shelves shake the dust off their leaves against him.

People began to talk. They said, "This man married a Frenchwoman. His favourite brother-in-law has notoriously deserted the traditions of his family, and become a rabid Buonapartist. He is a colonel in the Guards. This man, Hilton, is making money in some underhand way by means of his brother-in-law." It was partly true. George Hilton, with a keen and well-judged confidence in French arms, had advanced an immense sum shortly before this to his brother-in-law, with which to speculate in the French Funds. Austerlitz had been won, the

coalition broken, and the Hiltons had pocketed forty thousand pounds. Since Lord Loughborough and Sir John Scott passed their Treason Act in 1792, no man had driven his coach and four through it to greater profit than George Hilton.

Some sharp and traitorous trading went on in those times ; and we are sorry to say that the house of Hilton and Co. were always looked upon as being deeply engaged in transactions which, even by the commercial world in those days, were considered dangerous and odd. Even at that time, when certain trades were paralysed, and there were so many needy merchants ready to sacrifice almost any principle to keep themselves afloat, the house of Hilton and Co., with their enormously increasing wealth, were looked on askance. They always seemed to have such wonderfully correct information from abroad. The Jews might follow George Hilton about the Exchange with bent body and sliding foot, to listen and see whether some priceless hint might not fall from him ; but the Christians were only distantly polite to him, although, when he had once been known to take a commercial step, there were hundreds eagerly ready to follow his example.

We have hardly to do with the ways by which

his enormous fortune was made: our business is more with what ultimately became of it. There are plenty of houses, eminently respectable now, whose books, from 1790 to 1815, would hardly stand a closer examination than those of Hilton and Co.

And also the history of the accumulation of this fortune must be told; because, in the mad and successful pursuit of his wealth, George Hilton had reached the age of fifty years before he bethought him that there was no one to inherit it.

The gold that he had wallowed in for thirty years had left its dross upon him; and the George Hilton of 1819, was a sadly different man from the George Hilton of 1789. The sarcastic young dandy had developed into a cold, calculating man of fifty; a man who seldom spoke in the House, but always shortly and to the purpose; a man who had refused office, some said; an odd man; a man no one liked very much, but a man so careful in his facts, that when he spoke he put every one else, save four or five, in a flutter; a man who would contradict the King on his throne, and had never had a genial smile or a joke for any man in the House, save for one, Lord Hawkesbury. After 1806 he laughed and joked no more in Parliament. Lord Hawkesbury

never forgave him the Austerlitz affair before mentioned. He kept on speaking terms with him for a time but after his removal into the House of Lords, in 1808, George Hilton found himself without a friend in the House, and only one friend in the world —that is to say, James Elliot, the third of those we saw at Christchurch Gate in 1789.

In 1819, then, he married. The wife he selected was a Frenchwoman. She was a cousin of his first wife's, and a daughter of an emigré count, Commilfaut, very little, very pretty, and an intensely devout Huguenot in religion. This marriage was a happier one than his first. She was soon the mother of two children, Eleanor and Robert.

CHAPTER II.

WITH, perhaps, less energy and talent than his friend George Hilton, James Elliot, the second of the two men mentioned in the first page of this book, contrived, in after life, to land himself in a higher position in the world than did his friend. His taste would have led him into political life —for who could have been at Christchurch with Canning and Jenkinson, and not have been ambitious?—but his fortune was far too meagre to allow him to think of it. He remained at his college, living on his studentship and his small fortune very happily indeed; keeping up a constant correspondence with the richer and better-born men who had gone out into the world to fight in the great battle which was then raging.

So his polities were confined to the common-room.

But sometimes he appeared before the world and had his say with the rest. He wrote a pamphlet once which made a sensation; he found this very charming. Here was a way to make himself heard. He wrote another pamphlet and then another. They were all good. His assumed signature began to be looked for, and people began to ask who he was. These pamphlets of his were very humorous and full of stinging allusions, which, we daresay, made men laugh them, but which now fall dead on the ear of any but a very old man indeed. Some of them have absurd titles, such as one (1801), "Choking the Black Dog with Butter;" and again, same date, "Shall we have the Doctor's Boy or the Constable?" By which last delicate allusion to Lord Sidmouth, it appears, not that it is of any great consequence, that he was in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war, and that his enthusiasm was slightly too strong for his manners.

The art of pamphleteering becomes, like most others, more easy by practice. James Elliot got to a great perfection in the art. He had considerable humour, and so his half-truths were put forward under a cloud of ridicule, and before people had done laughing, the question had gone by. He never spared

but one man, Mr. Jenkinson. Once this gentleman (developed into Lord Hawkesbury since 1796) was accused of having written one of these pamphlets himself, but the very next one which appeared under the same signature, entirely dissipated that notion. Lord Hawkesbury came in for his share of good-humoured railing abuse with the rest. It was evident that this man, this “Beta,” as he chose to sign himself, was a man of great ability. Nobody was safe with him. His principles wanted fixing: he had no principles at present. They must really be fixed. Such a man was lost to the public business of the country.

In 1808, then, his old friend, Lord Liverpool, with the full consent of all his colleagues, offered place to his old friend and correspondent James Elliot; the place of Inspector of Shoals and Quicksands, worth £1,500 a year. And of all the appointments made by the good Lord Liverpool during his long tenure of office, this was perhaps the best. It was made in quieter and less anxious times than those which followed—in the merry old war times, when a man’s friend was his friend still, and one knew one’s friend from one’s enemy—when one’s heart could warm up at thinking of dear old Jim Elliot’s delight at getting

this place, and one still had wit or folly enough left in one to put a few lines of doggrel into the postscript of the letter giving him the offer of it—in the times which came before the Peace, and before those weary fifteen years when one sat and drove, or tried to drive, four such terrible horses as Peel, Wellington, Huskisson, and Canning, four-in-hand, only to drop down dead from sheer anxiety and over-work at the end of it all. Peace be with Lord Liverpool's ashes! We very strongly suspect him of having been a good and noble man.

The last Lord High Inspector of the Shoals and Quicksands was Admiral Sir Foreland North, who died in 1707. He accumulated a fortune in that office, and was made Lord Sands of Godwin. It was found that he had scandalously neglected his duties, and the peculiar revenues of the office being found remunerative, it was put in commission, my Lords of the Shoals and Quicksands being required to pay an Inspector so much a year, and to pocket the rest of the revenues themselves. This was found to work very well; it created patronage; and the Inspector being liable to forfeiture of his office for neglect, the work was better done than in the old times.

The revenues of the office of Lord High Com-

missioner of the Shoals and Quicksands were derived from several sources. Heavy tonnage dues were demanded from all ships which passed through the Needles, came within three miles of Eddystone Rock, passed St. Michael's Mount without letting fly topsail-halliards, threw empty bottles or garbage into the sea within three miles of any one of the Cinque Ports (counting from Old Hythe, and including eight miles east of Deal), passed through the Steat of Skye, and did many other things too tedious to mention. These revenues, though they doubtless cost a great deal to collect, paid in a great deal of money. The office might sometimes once a year have a grand battalion day in the Arches, and might have to spend several thousand pounds in proving "that John Smith, of the Hope schooner, master mariner, was within three miles of the port of Sandwich when, on the day aforesaid, he did then and there, not having the fear of God before his eyes, wilfully, maliciously, and devilishly, cast into the sea, sundry, that is to say, five hundred glass bottles, against the peace of our Lord the King, &c. &c. ;" yet, in spite of all this, the revenues of the office were, for many years, a very pretty provision for five lords, and an inspector to do their work. There were good years and bad years.

Sometimes John Smith would prove his case—prove “that he was a good five miles off Sandwich ; that, being disguised in liquor, he had only thrown his empty brandy-bottle at his apprentice’s head, and that it had gone accidentally overboard, and had floated within the prescribed limits ;” in which case, my lords would take it up to Chancery, and have to pay. But the Inspector always got his salary ; and my lords made a pretty good thing of it on the whole.

But after sixty years or so, master mariners began to have the fear of God before their eyes, to go round the Isle of Wight, to let fly topsail-halliards in the right place, to keep clear of the Eddystone, to kick the apprentice into the lee-scuppers before they threw the brandy-bottle at him—to conform, in fact, more or less, to all laws, human and divine ; which proceedings had this result : that the Lords of the Shoals and Quicksands were left without money to pay their Inspector. It became necessary to supplement their revenues by a parliamentary grant, which was done. But the parliamentary grant was so small, that, since 1795, the position of a Lord of the Shoals and Quicksands had been merely an honorary one. Parliament paid their Inspector. Sometimes they

got twenty pounds apiece; sometimes they did not. But Government allowed them a yacht, and the Inspector had the use of it.

When Mr. Elliot took the place, in 1808, he found everything in confusion. There were fifty squabbles on hand with the Lords of the Admiralty on the one hand, and with the Trinity Board on the other. He set to work like a young giant, although he was now forty years of age, and brought everything into order.

He had no special knowledge of his subject, but he soon knew more about it than any one. When a man has learnt how to learn, he can soon learn anything. The “experts” connected with his office, coasting skippers, pilots, lighthouse-keepers, and such people, came to him with their facts, put them before him, and looked at him, as much as to say, “Here are our facts, can you generalize from them?” They very soon found that he could. They were perfectly contented. It was a very good appointment.

My Lords of the Admiralty were high, and the Trinity brothers were mighty with him. There had been “heats” between these two great bodies on the one side, and the Commissioners of Shoals and Quicksands on the other, in which my Lords of the

Shoals had left their Inspector to bear the brunt. The story of my Lords of the Admiralty having threatened to fire into the yacht of the Shoals and Quicksands, on the Motherbank, must be untrue, for the Admiralty yacht *had no gun on board*. Therefore, how could they have threatened to fire?

Mr. Elliot composed all these difficulties, and got his office into noble order. His beloved Lord Liverpool used to point to him with pride: “*My man, gentlemen.*”

But what with soothing my Lords of the Admiralty, and doing battle with the Trinity House, for leave to do their work, it was five years before he thought of marrying. When he did think of it, there was no doubt about the lady whatever. He married a certain Miss Beverley, a lady of thirty-one, gentle and good, like himself; and on his forty-ninth birthday she bore him a noble boy.

CHAPTER III.

IT is with the fortunes of this boy, Austin Elliot, and with the fortunes of George Hilton's little girl, Eleanor, that we have principally to concern ourselves.

Mr. Elliot had lived in an atmosphere of politics ever since he was nineteen, and had known, and known well, some, nay most, of the leading men of his time. He had his grievance, his crotchet, like most other men, good or bad ; and his grievance was this : That he, James Elliot, might have succeeded in public life, if he had not been so unfortunately poor. He was very likely right. No one will ever know whether he was right or not ; the thought was a little, carefully unexpressed, grievance to him. He never got sour over it, he never expressed it in words ; but the thought that he had been only

prevented from holding a very high place in the world by his poverty, was at times a source of vexation to him, more particularly whenever he saw a beggar on horseback, or a fool in a high place.

He was poor no longer: he had a good place, his wife succeeded to a very good fortune, and his boy, Austin, was growing to be one of the handsomest, cleverest, bravest lads ever seen—a boy who at ten years old showed, as his father thought, most singular and precocious talent.

At this time, when Austin was ten years old, and when there was no doubt of his being a very clever boy of his age, Mr. Elliot took the great resolution of his life. That boy should be educated as a statesman. “That boy should be prime—Hush—don’t let us talk nonsense,” said Mr. Elliot to himself, with a radiant smile, as he sat one night over the fire, and saw various things in the hot coals.

The idea was rather a grand one. Mr. Elliot’s creed was, that statesmanship was a trade, and that a man must serve his apprenticeship to that trade as to any other. A man should be trained to polities early, if he was going to succeed. Look at Pitt the younger. (He could not have read Lord Macaulay’s ‘Life of Pitt;’ it would have killed him. Lord

Macaulay's atrocious suggestion, that Pitt was not the most sublimely wise of the human race, would have cut the ground from under his feet.) Yes, a statesman must be trained ; of that there was not the least doubt in the world.

And he, James Elliot, would train and educate one. His own boy. If he, with his intricate knowledge of every political twist and turn for forty years, could not do that, who could ? And see the material he had to work on ; was there ever such a boy ? "Never," said Mr. Elliot : "Seldom," say we. He certainly was a boy of the very highest promise, and the man who doubted that Mr. Elliot would succeed in making a leading statesman of him must have been a foolish person. It is no use for that man to say that Mr. Elliot did not succeed. By all rules he should have succeeded, therefore the charge of folly stands.

So Mr. Elliot was going to educate his son for a statesman. But how ?

This was the most delightful problem. The thought of it made Mr. Elliot's good face glow with happiness. Here was a beautiful soul, a noble intellect, ready to receive any impression whatever. Mr. Elliot worked at his task with a will, but he

perhaps began it a little too early. The young ambition must be excited by the recital of noble deeds, and so little Austin heard many a long story of great debates, grand political tricks, and so on, which were far from interesting. At the same time, Mr. Elliot was very furions with the conduct of a certain great statesman on the Catholic question, and found it rather pleasant to denounce him to the wondering Austin, who, at ten years old, had acquired a distinct idea that Parliament was a place something like school: and that Sir Robert Peel was a traitor many degrees worse than Guy Fawkes; had a distinct belief, indeed, that, when every one had their due, the Right Honourable gentleman would be carried about on a chair, with his boots on hindside before, and all the straw coming out at his knees.

When Austin was ten years old, his mother died, and he was left more exclusively to his father's care. And then these two contracted a strong personal affection for one another, which lasted to the very end, and which was never clouded for one instant. It was well for Austin to remember that hereafter; well to remember that he had never cast one shadow on his father's kind, gentle face.

This boy Austin grew so rapidly in both moral and physical beauty, that the absurd chimerical plans of his father seemed to become, year by year, more probable of fulfilment, and his old friends began to leave laughing at him and to confine themselves to shaking their heads.

There can be no doubt that the boy was not perfect, but really he was one of the finest and noblest boys ever seen. He made a great success everywhere. Possibly it would be better, instead of cataloguing his various perfections, to ask you to think of the handsomest and most amiable boy you ever knew, and call him Austin Elliot. You will know him as a man ; let us skip his pædeia.

One of Austin's earliest recollections was that of going to play with Eleanor and Robert Hilton ; for, after Lord Liverpool's death, James Elliot resumed his intimacy with his old friend George Hilton once more. He had always kept up his acquaintance with him, but it had not been very close for many years. Lord Liverpool had never forgotten the affair of the French funds. It was the sort of thing that he could not forget ; and, indeed, it is not a pleasant subject to dwell on. James Elliot never mentioned George Hilton's name before him, but he would not

throw his old friend entirely overboard. And after Liverpool and Canning died, with the harness on their backs, the world was very lonely to him, and he once more grew intimate with his old friend, whom he had always tried to defend, even against his own conscience.

Eleanor Hilton was not, as a child, beautiful, or even pretty. At first, her features were too square and *prononcé*; but, from the very first, she was as gentle, good, and sensible as a child might be. Robert, on the other hand, was peevish and somewhat violent. He had, also, a strange wayward mendacity—at times refusing to tell a lie to save himself from punishment, at another lying without an object. A still more fatal vice had not hitherto shown itself, but was developed afterwards.

When Eleanor was twelve and Robert ten, their mother died; and, nearly at the same time, Austin Elliot went to Eton, and Robert was left with Eleanor to the care of a governess. Had old Hilton known as much about the boy, as the governess and Eleanor, he would never have, in all probability, sent the boy to Eton; but so it was. He followed Austin to Eton after two years; and we need hardly say, after the character we have before given to Austin, that he

was affectionately kind to his old playfellow, and did all for him he could. But Robert soon began to go wrong : he was always in trouble. Nothing serious, however, took place till after several months.

There came to Eton the very same half, and to the very same house as Austin, a certain Lord Charles Barty, of the same age as Austin, and by no means unlike him in person and manners. In a very short time, a great boy-friendship sprang up between the two. In the very first letter he wrote to Eleanor his new friend was mentioned, in most enthusiastic terms ; and his intimacy with this friend seemed to increase as it went on. It is useless to describe Lord Charles Barty as a boy, for we shall see him hereafter in manhood, in far more terrible places than the old playing-fields, or the Brocas or Surly, or any of those places one hears Eton men talking about ; nevertheless, it is necessary to tell you that, like Austin, he was a noble and manly fellow, and that he was as worthy of Austin's honest love as Austin was of his.

When Robert Hilton appeared, after two years of friendship between these two, whether it was through jealousy, or through mistrust, or what, it is impossible to say, but Lord Charles Barty took a violent

dislike to him. To obviate this, and to interest his friend in poor Robert Hilton, Austin told him what he had not very long known for himself, that he was in love with Eleanor Hilton, and that this was her brother.

All the chivalry in Charles Barty's heart fired up at this. One sharp pang of jealousy shot through him when Austin told him that there was one in the world preferred to himself, but it was instantly smothered and killed. He would have liked a few more years of his friend's undivided love, but it was not to be, Austin was in love, *fiancée*. Mrs. Austin's brother must be taken up, whatever might be his faults.

It is no use trying to laugh at all this, by saying that Lord Charles Barty and Austin were neither of them fifteen. They were quite as much in earnest, if not more so, than if they had been five-and-twenty. Lord Charles took up Robert Hilton and patronized him and was affectionate to him and fought his battles for him to the death, but all in a high and mighty manner, and under protest.

But the catastrophe came. One day, while Austin and Charles Barty were out at cricket, or what not, a boy, at home in disgrace, came into Lord Charles'

room and found Robert Hilton at his desk. He seized him and raised an alarm. The master was fetched, and the wretched boy's boxes were searched. Everything which had been missed in the house for a long time was found there. The habit which the governess and Eleanor had noticed in him, and which they dared not mention to his father, was confirmed with a vengeance. The lad was a thief! When Austin and Lord Charles came innocently home, laughing, they found the whole mine sprung under their feet. Either one of them would have given their right hands to save the lad, whom neither liked, but it was too late.

He was so very, very young, they pleaded for him. Austin and Lord Charles went personally round to the other boys whose things had been stolen and begged their forbearance. He was so very, very young. I need not say what English boys did under those circumstances. There was no scandal: he was sent home.

So it came about, that George Hilton's inordinate, and somewhat unprincipled love of gain began to be revenged on him in the person of his only son. He knew it and felt it as keenly as any one, but he hardened his heart. He refused to see the boy for

some time, and he saw him but very seldom until he died.

It becomes necessary that we should follow Robert Hilton to the end, before we return to Austin and Eleanor, and it is very shortly done.

This case was the one on which the Rev. Letmedown Easy gained his present enormous and justly-earned reputation for keeping young bears from growling, by feeding them with the toast from under the asparagus, with the ends of the twists, the eggs out of the pigeon-pies, and other soothing dainties, until the whole thing was blown over and everybody had forgotten all about it. He well earned the thousand pounds which James Hilton paid him for keeping his son five years without scandal, and for sending his father a good character of him each half-year. The Rev. Letmedown was not such a very great rogue ; he undertook to whitewash the boy, and he whitewashed him. He kept him at his parsonage in Essex safe out of temptation for five years, until the whole thing was forgotten. He was paid for doing it and he did it.

Our already old friend James Elliot begged his son not to renew his acquaintance with Robert Hilton, and Austin acquiesced. Old Hilton never allowed

his son to come into the house, and so Austin never saw Robert after his unfortunate departure from Eton. It was no fault, however, of Austin's; if Robert had ever been allowed to come home by his stern old father, they would have seen enough of one another. For Austin's love for Eleanor grew stronger year by year, and he was always with her.

More of this immediately. Just before Austin went to Oxford, Eleanor wrote to him that Robert and her father were reconciled at last, and that Robert had got his commission. At this point Mr. Easy's fictitious respectability suddenly and lamentably broke down. Before Robert had been three months in the army, people began to talk. Gossip was followed by open accusations, accusations by court-martial. The end was swift, sudden and sure: Robert Hilton was disgracefully expelled from the army.

CHAPTER IV.

THE private residence of the Inspector-General of Shoals and Quicksands was at Mortlake, his official yacht generally lay at Gravesend, and his office was on the terrace of Somerset House.

The duties of the Inspector of Shoals and Quicksands are, to inspect them, and to report on the state of them to my Lords. This is done firstly by examination of local witnesses, and secondly by personal experience. The former of these two methods is, of course, in some measure performed at the office, and the second mainly by means of the yacht.

The office is one of the freshest and breeziest in London. On a summer's day it is a very cheerful spot; the steamers dashing ceaselessly up and down, and the river running in a great gleaming band eastward towards St. Paul's. When the wind is

blowing strongly from the east or south-east, bringing with it, in spite of miles of brickwork and smoke, a fresh whiff of the wild glorious sea, and lashing the river into waves, it is a pleasanter and fresher place still. But the best time to be about that office, is in a gale of wind from the southward, or south-westward ; when the glass rattles in the windows and the driving rain comes spinning into the lobby, when the door is opened ; and when the most prosaic clerk, wearily copying the “statement of William Grumble, master of the light-ship on the St. Margaret Sands, concerning the shifting of the N.E. Channel,” cannot help staying for an instant to wonder how it fares with William Grumble in his light-ship just now ; when the chimney-pots are flying, the water barometer varying four or five inches every quarter of an hour, and the gulls up the river in dozens.

Ever since he was a boy, and a very small one, Austin had been very fond of the office : it had always been a great treat to him to be allowed to come to the office, and plague his father, at his great square leather-covered table. When his father wouldn’t stand him any longer he used to go out and “skylark” with the clerks, who, you may depend, did not object to that sort of thing. But presently,

he being a very noisy boy, his father would come in, and turn him out of the clerks' rooms into the lobby, to disport himself there.

And an uncommonly merry, gentlemanly set of fellows were those aforesaid clerks as one could wish to meet with. No chief of any Department had his clerks better in hand than James Elliot, and no one scolded less—but we will say no more of this. Though the clerks were merry young gentlemen, yet when turned out of their rooms, Austin found in the lobby men he liked still better than the clerks.

Men with calm clear eyes, and deliberate thoughtful speech. Most of them men with brown horny hands and grizzled hair. A few of them dressed in rough pilot coats; more, in old-fashioned long-tailed coats, with brass buttons; more of them still, soberly dressed in unobtrusive black, but all with the same calm clear eye. These were the lighthouse-keepers, or such as they—men of the storm, of the lee shore, of the reef, of the quicksand—men from the lonely station standing far seaward on the thunder-smitten cliff, or from the solitary lighthouse, on the surf-washed ledge, miles out in the raging sea.

It was well for this golden-haired lad, with his

beautiful face, to stand at the knees of such men as these, and listen to them ; to hear from one, how on a night, when sea and air were all mixed together in deadly turmoil, the light-ship he commanded broke loose without their knowing it, and was carried over dangerous sands, and thrown high and dry and safe on the beach ; and from another one, how he and his mate sat up one such night in the lonely lighthouse, five miles from land, watching the corpse of the third and oldest of them, who had died that morning—and how, while they sat there, they heard, but could not see, an unmanageable and dismasted ship strike the rock and go to pieces, a hundred feet below them ; and that, creeping down and opening the lower door, and looking out into the black horror of darkness, they could hear in the night, close to them, the crashing and cracking of timbers, and the sound of men, women, and children calling on God Almighty for help ! There was nothing there in the morning, said this one, in answer to an unexpressed inquiry from Austin's blue eyes. She had struck at low tide.

Yes ; the office was a pleasant place enough, but there was something better than the office—the yacht. Once a year, in the beginning of recess,

there would come a long blue letter from my Lords of the Admiralty (not our Lords), the gist of which was that the Inspector of Shoals and Quicksands was to hold himself in readiness to accompany their Lordships in their annual inspection of buoys. Austin, of course, went with his father on these occasions, and enjoyed it mightily ; for, as he says in his reckless disrespectful way, that my Lords are a deuced jolly set of fellows. When they were accompanying the Admiralty yacht they used to see a great deal of very pleasant society, and Austin had quickly won the hearts, not only of the Quicksand Lords (who held him being their own property), but also the hearts of all the Admiralty Lords, excepting one dreadful old sea Lord, with a cork leg and a grievance about his wife's nephew, whom nobody could manage.

Golden, glorious days were these. Sometimes the two yachts would come steaming swiftly and suddenly into the harbour of some great arsenal, by the ugly hulks, and under the rolling downs, flattened on the summit by dismantled fortifications, and so through her Majesty's fleet. But however swiftly and suddenly they came, they could never take them by surprise. Always, as the Admiralty yacht passed

the first ship, the great guns began booming out their salute, and ship after ship took up with the glorious music, until the vessels of the ear began to throb with the concussion of the air, and in calm weather the harbour would be filled with drifting smoke ; for the time when these things happened was long ago, before gunpowder was so much needed for other purposes as now, and before we saved £30,000 a-year by stopping unnecessary salutes.

And once it came about that there was a discussion, as to whether or no a red buoy should be put at the outer edge of the swing, to mark the entrance to the Mary Anne Channel. Mr. Elliot went to the chief Admiralty Lord, and represented that he thought it necessary. As a general rule, Mr. Elliot's suggestions were promptly attended to ; but on occasion, My Lords hum'd and hah'd a great deal. One said that there had been a good deal said about Naval expenditure lately, and that if it were necessary to have a buoy at all (which, mind you, he did not for one instant admit), he was for having a blue buoy instead of a red, because every one, who knew the least about their duty, were well aware that blue paint could be got a farthing a pound cheaper than red. Another denied this *in toto*, and said that red

paint was cheapest. A third denied the existence of the Mary Anne Channel altogether. A fourth contradicted him flatly; but said that if the wreck of the Mary Anne was moved, the sand would silt in again, and then what was the use of your buoy? Mr. Elliot, like a man of the world, contradicted their Lordships, individually and collectively, and insisted on a buoy, and a red one, too; the red paint was just as cheap as the blue. As Mr. Elliot had foreseen, their Lordships had a squabble among themselves, which ended in their turning on him, and ordering him to proceed at once on board his yacht, the Pelican, and proceed to Portsmouth to await their Lordships' orders. At the same time, a curt, short message was sent quickly down by the telegraph—which at that time was a thing like a windmill gone mad—to the commander of the Admiralty yacht Falcon, to hold himself in readiness to proceed to sea with their Lordships at once; and then their Lordships departed to Belgrave and Grosvenor Squares, and where not, to pack up their things, and told their ladyships that it was getting intolerable, that they could not and would not stand being dictated to by a subordinate any longer, and that they were going to see into the matter for themselves.

The cause of all this dire anger, and all this Spartan self-denial, was as follows :—The Commons were adjourned, leaving Daniel O'Connell to the mercy of the Lords, but Parliament was not prorogued. The august sun was shedding a mellow sleepy light over cape and island, a gentle west wind was blowing up channel, scarce strong enough to whiten the purple waves. And well! If their lordships in such case, having the power to go to sea, had stayed on shore, they would have deserved impeachment, or a contempt worse than impeachment. However this may be, however angry their lordships may have been with Mr. Elliot, there was no cloud, not the faintest speck of one, on any of their faces, when he boarded the Falcon at Spithead and reported himself. Three days afterwards, Austin, expressing himself in that low, slangy way which the young men of the present day seem so anxious to adopt, said that my lords were “uncommonly larky.” This, however, is certain, that Austin and his father dined on board with their lordships; and before the soup was off the table the great paddles got to work, and the Falcon, with the Pelican close in her wake, went thundering down the Solent, and so out into the leaping summer waves of the channel; and that

as the summer sun went down, Portland was hanging to the north—a vast purple wall overrun by threads and bands of green; and that Austin and his father were put on board their own yacht at eight bells, speed being slackened for the purpose. And when they got on board, Austin remarked to his father that they seemed to be in for rather a jolly spree.

Then followed the short summer night, and soon after dawn Austin was on deck looking at the Start towering up to the north, blue, purple, with gleams of golden green. And while Austin is looking at the Start, let us look at him once for all, because his personal appearance will not greatly change before this story gets wellnigh told.

A very short description will suffice. We only wish to give you such an idea of his personality as to make him real to you. From a beautiful boy, he had grown to be a very handsome young man—as *some* said, one of the handsomest ever seen. He was light-haired, with a rather delicate brilliant complexion, and blue eyes. His figure was very good, his air graceful, his manner winning and gentle, his dress always perfect, his conversation easy, clever, and inexhaustible, all of which things caused every woman, high or low, whom he met to get uncommonly

fond of him. But besides, he not only had the women on his side, which many a handsome young dandy has had before, but also the men.

The reason that he had the men on his side was, that he was a good fellow, and that means a good deal; so much so, that it is impossible to describe, with any exhaustive accuracy, what it means. Although we all of us know a good fellow, it is hard to be made to define one. Austin was one, certainly. He laughed with those who were merry, he condoled with those who were sad, nursed those who were sick, lent money to those who were poor, was a good companion to those who were rich, and carried comfort to those who were in love. Many others do all these things, and yet are not good fellows. Austin was a good fellow, for he was in earnest, and any one who took the trouble might see it. He was now at Oxford, and although his diligence might have been greater, yet his tutors had great hopes of a very high degree for him. Rarely does one find a young man of prospects more brilliant than those of Austin, as he stands this morning on the deck of the yacht, looking northward at the start.

So the two yachts went tearing down channel, as

though their errand were to arrive at the Swing before the channel was silted up, and before the second sunset they were passing St. Michael's Mount; the third they were gazing in amazement at the Worm's Head, rising like a serpent out of the sea; the next they were at the Swing.

Here there was an accident.* Austin was on board of the Falcon, and, as they approached the shoal, their lordships all began wrangling once more on the buoy question, which had been shelved just now, in the pleasure of the voyage. There was no need for them to have troubled themselves about it, Mr. Elliot would have explained, but no, they were not coming five hundred miles for nothing, and so they began to wrangle.

The commander asked, should he steer by the Admiralty chart, or by Mr. Elliot's directions? Mr. Elliot must be made to know that their lordships were not going to be hoodwinked by a subordinate. By the Admiralty chart, if you please.

Thump, bump! up goes her nose two feet in the

* If Austin is correct about this accident, there must have been two accidents to the Admiralty yacht, very similar; for it is a matter of history that My Lords bumped themselves ashore in the Bristol Channel in 1846. They should be more careful. What should we do if anything were to happen to them?

air, and down she goes on the port side. The senior lord goes into the lee scuppers, and Austin indecently bursts out laughing. The Falcon was aground hard and fast. This is Austin's account of the matter. It seems somewhat apocryphal.

She was off again at high tide, with the loss of some copper. But the effect of the accident was, that they rounded the Lleyn and made for Liverpool.

It was a very important voyage this for Austin, and the conclusion of it more important still. Austin had been by this voyage thrown into such close and intimate familiarity with some one or two leading men, as commonly happens on board ship; where intimacies are so rapidly made, as to astonish those who are not in the habit of going to sea. Austin had used his time well. He was as irresistible as usual. He had never been presented to their own senior Lord before he went on board, and considered such an event rather a great one for a lad at the University, without any pretensions to birth. But after four days at sea, he had laughed when he picked that Lord out of the lee scuppers, and that Lord had somewhat eagerly appealed to his opinion, against another Lord, as to whether or no he had prophesied the accident. Which was getting on very well indeed.

But better than this happened to him. They turned into the Strait, and dropped anchor at Caernarvon, the Senior Lord of the Quicksands was going to disembark there, and post to his estate in Merionethshire. Austin's ears actually tingled with delight when the senior lord asked him to come with him, and spend a fortnight with him and his family among the mountains.

Austin was ambitious, and he knew that one of the roads to political greatness was the being well thought of in certain quarters. But he was no tuft hunter, and he knew besides that the only way to gain a footing in a house was, to come in at the front door and not at the back. From his first acquaintance with Lord Charles Barty at Eton, he had had the full run of Cheshire House, but, since he had been at the University, his sense had told him that he had better not go there till he was asked. In spite of Lord Charles Barty's friendship for him, which developed as they both grew older, Austin had, for the last three years, managed to avoid entering the house, until the time should come when he might be asked to do so by much more important people than his old school-mate.

But here was a real triumph. The Senior Lord

was a very great man indeed. There were very few greater. Austin had only been presented to him four days before, and had laughed at him but yesterday, when he picked him up out of the lee-scuppers, and yet here was his Lordship insisting on his coming home with him. It was a very great stroke of business to a young man so anxious to push himself in the world as Austin.

Even at Caernarvon Austin's wonder was excited, not merely at the reverence which was paid to his Lordship, but also at the, if possible, greater reverence paid to himself. He was very much amused by, and puzzled at it. The Landlord at Caernarvon bowed to him, and called him, "My Lord." "Simple people these Welsh," thought Austin.

But he did not think so very much of it, for this day was an era in his life. For the first time he saw mountain scenery—and I think that the reader will agree with the author that, of all the introductions to mountain scenery, that of the road from Caernarvon to Llanberis is one of the most sudden, most startling, and most beautiful.

My Lord, whom we will now call Mr. Cecil, sat opposite to him, and was very much pleased with his boyish enthusiasm; and, indeed, the enthusiasm of

a young person, when they first find their visible horizon tilted up some ninety-five degrees, is very pleasing. Mr. Cecil sat and smiled at him, with an air of calm pride on his face, as if he had made it all himself, and was pleased to find that his trouble was appreciated. But as we all do this, when we introduce a friend to some new scenery, we must not be hard on Mr. Cecil.

In the very middle of the finest part of the Pass, there came riding towards them a very tall, important-looking gentleman, with very black whiskers. He stopped and saluted Mr. Cecil, and looked with such lively interest at Austin, that the poor young gentleman felt inclined to laugh. The gentleman with the black whiskers asked, with a sweet smile, to be introduced. When Austin was introduced as Mr. Elliot, the gentleman looked very much disappointed and aggrieved, and was many degrees shorter in his speech towards Austin than the latter had supposed, from previous symptoms, he would have been.

It was a memorable and delightful day. A lucky rogue was Austin, to be shut up *tête-à-tête* in an open carriage with one of the most agreeable and famous men in England, and driven through a con-

tinual succession of such beautiful scenery. Mr. Cecil, on his part, was delighted with Austin's charming manners and ingenuousness. He listened kindly and with interest to his confidenees, to his anticipations of a career in the world; and made Austin blush with delight, by saying, that from all he had seen of him, there was nothing whatever to prevent the realization of a very great portion of his hopes.

But the most beautiful among all the beautiful objects seen that day was the one seen last. More beautiful than a million silver threads of water, streaming from ten thousand crystalline peaks. More beautiful than all the soaring ranges of feathering birch, which hung purple over the winter snow, or shone golden over the summer fern, in all glorious Caernarvonshire.

And it was this. As the summer sun was still blazing on the topmost crag of Snowdon, and as each of the fourteen little lakes of that most exquisite of mountains was sending up its tribute of mist to wreath all night around the brows of the sleeping cliffs—at such time Mr. Cecil and Austin came to a wall, inside of what was a dark band of plantation, and Mr. Cecil stopped the carriage, and said,

—“This is the beginning of my park. Let us get out and walk ; we shall be at the house as soon as the carriage, if we go by the short cut.”

So they got out, and the carriage drove on. Mr. Cecil opened a gate in the wall, and said, “Come on.”

And Austin, standing in the road, and looking at Snowdon, answered,—“One minute more, only one minute more, with the mountain ! Remember this is the first time I have ever seen this sort of thing. See ! the black, purple shadow is creeping up, and gaining every instant on the golden glory lingering around the summit. And look, Mr. Cecil, every wreath of mist from every wrinkle and hollow among the great slate buttresses, is turning from fleecy white to a pale, ghostly blue. I beg pardon, I am keeping you waiting. People generally make asses of themselves when they are first introduced to mountain scenery.”

“Generally, yes,” said Mr. Cecil ; “but you are slightly poetical for a young gentleman who proposes to succeed in polities. Come on, I have something to show you finer than that mountain before you get any dinner.”

He was right. The path grew steep and rocky as

it wound down through the dark wood, and to the right Austin began to distinguish a dim abyss, and to hear a sound as of a mighty wind coming through the trees; and then suddenly they stood upon a slight bridge, and were looking up at a broad cascade which streamed and spouted a hundred feet over head.

He gave a cry of honest delight at the glorious spectacle. He was standing, still absorbed in it a few minutes afterwards, when he was touched on the shoulder.

He turned, expecting to see only his host, but beside him was standing the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, with her arm round her father's waist.

“My daughter!” But was it really his daughter, or was it some beautiful fairy of the stream, some being born of the amber-coloured water, of the white foam, and of the last rosy tints that hung on the cliffs over head? Such, for one instant, was his silly fancy, as he looked on this sudden apparition, at her light-brown hair, her pure red cheek, and her white gown. Was it fated that every one who met him this day should look disappointed? Miss Cecil, the most amiable as well as the most beautiful of women, even she seemed to have some slight shade

of disappointment on her face. It was inexplicable, but very annoying.

If her beauty showed to advantage amidst the seething mist of the waterfall, it did not show to less advantage under the shadows of the woodland, as she, her father and Austin walked home together. Not to less advantage, at all events, to Austin, but to greater. And in his eyes her beauty seemed to increase as he looked at her, and grew even more and more divine at each turn of the head and at each fresh expression of the face. Austin had never seen such beauty before, Mr. Cecil had. The beautiful girl's dead mother was even more beautiful than she.

From the windows of Tyn y Rhraiadr (the farm of the waterfall), you can see, on a fine summer's night, Snowdon hanging aloft like a purple crystal, and the arch of twilight creeping along behind it from west to east, through the short summer night, until it begins to flash and blaze into a dawn more glorious than the scarce-forgotten sunset.

And all through that night, until the arch of sunrise had grown from dull orange to primrose, and even after, when the sun himself had looked over the distant Glyder, and the long shadows of tree and rock were cast along the dewy sward, and

the mowers began brushing through the grass, and the murmurs of many waters, which had waxed and waned dully on the ear through the night ; had died before the jubilant matins of a thousand birds ; until such time did Austin sit at the open windows of his bedroom, and look out on the glorious prospect and all the wonderful changes of colour which take place between dawn and sunrise, but as one who saw them not.

For the arrow had gone home this time up to the very feather.

CHAPTER V.

AUSTIN sat and thought what he could recollect to have heard about her. He had not been much into society where he would have been likely to have heard much about her. Many of the clerks in his father's office would be likely to know more.

He remembered one thing, however. He had heard, that she was an only daughter and an immense heiress, and that all the estates in four counties would go to this young beauty. And he was desperately in love with her.

He saw nothing absurd in this; he did not get up in the dead of night and stealthily fly the house, without looking back for terror. No! he waited impatiently for day that he might see her again, and get more madly, hopelessly entangled with her than ever.

If she had shown a trifling disappointment when he came the night before, she seemed to be very much pleased with him next day. She met him with ease, and almost with familiarity—with so much familiarity, indeed, that he, not knowing the cause of it, was very much delighted indeed.

She had gone into her father's dressing-room that morning, and said—

“ Father dear, who is this Mr. Elliot whom you have brought home ? ”

“ He is a young Oxford man. He promises uncommon well. They say his degree will be very good indeed, and he is very ambitious. He may end by being a man of some mark. Who knows.”

“ Is he nice ? ”

“ Can't say, I am sure. That is your business. He is to marry that old scoundrel Hilton's daughter, and go into Parliament with her money, I believe. I have brought him down here for a few days to make his acquaintance, and introduce him to Mewstone. He will be useful to him. He must pack off soon, for he takes his degree in the October term.”

“ When is Mewstone coming ? ” said she, with a sigh.

“ When he chooses,” said Mr. Cecil laughing, “ you will find *that* out.”

Miss Cecil laughed—the most charming merry laugh you ever heard—and then sailed away downstairs, to entertain that poor fool, Austin Elliot.

Before she had been five minutes in the room with him, he saw that his first estimate of her extraordinary beauty was by no means too great. Not only was her face as nearly as perfect as possible; not only were her brilliant, yet quiet, hazel eyes, the most beautiful eyes he had ever seen; not only was her golden brown hair, looped so carelessly and so gracefully around the perfect shaped head, beyond comparison in the world, as he thought—all these things he had seen approached—but her grace of manner—a grace he had read of as being achieved by some great actresses—was something which he had never seen approached—a grace seen only in repose, and her repose was continual. She moved, of course; but there was no point of time about any of her movements: you could not say that at such a time she did so-and-so. She only slid from one posture of infinite grace into another. Austin thought that there was as much difference between her motions and those of another woman, as between those of a doe in the wild woodlands, and those of a soldier doing his exercise.

"I am so glad my father brought you home with him," she said. "I was rather dull here, all alone with the waterfall and the dogs. Will you please tell me about the yacht running ashore. Please make me laugh about it. I am sure you can if you choose. I can always like people who can make me laugh."

Austin certainly could do that. He described their Lordships' squabble—the heartless obstinacy of the commander, his sardonic grin when he had made their Lordships run the yacht ashore, and the extraordinary infuriated heap of administrative talent of the highest order, which lay kicking on the deck, at the first bump on the sand. He would have given five pounds, he said, to have been on board his father's yacht at the time, and seen his father's face. The expression of fun, he said, tempered with propriety, which would have been seen in that face, would have been better worth seeing than the whole of their seven Lordships, fighting together in the lee-scuppers.

She laughed very heartily, and she said, "I think I shall like you very much indeed. Will you come and walk with me this morning; my father will be busy on the farm? My father tells me you are

going into politics. Will you tell me, for I have not seen a newspaper, what are people saying about this O'Connell business?"

"Well," said Austin, "they are saying all kinds of things. Mr. Cecil hopes that the Lords will reverse the judgment of the lower courts. I entirely disagree with your father. There is something very charming in that. I, Austin Elliot, distinctly tell you, Miss Cecil, that I disagree with a privy counsellor and first Lord of Shoals and Quicksands. It makes one feel taller to say it. I have a good mind to tell him so himself."

"Better not," she said, laughing; "such presumption might ruin your prospects. And now let us leave politics and come and see the dogs."

There was, in and about the kennel, almost every variety of dog conceivable. There were deep-jowled dogs, with sunken eyes and wrinkled foreheads, at the first distant note of whose bell-like voice, the hunted slave in the Cuban jungle lies down and prays for death; yet who here is a stupid, blundering, affectionate brute, who will let you do as you like with him, and casts himself on his back at Miss Cecil's feet. English bloodhounds, too, stupid, sleepy, good-natured, slobbering. St. Bernard's, too

—dogs of the snowstorm and the avalanche, wise-looking dogs, self-contained, appearing to know more than they chose to say, but idiots withal notwithstanding, and very great idiots, as are many self-contained and wise-looking animals beside them. A great rough Newfoundland dog, chained up. Marry, why? Because he had been the pet of the house, until one day he had become *Must*, *Berserk*, or what you choose to call it, until the devil, or the seven devils, which lurk in *all* Newfoundland dogs, gentle and docile as they are, had broken loose, and Mr. Cecil had had to fight with him for his life in his own dressing-room. There were two French poodles, which, as Mr. Sala says somewhere, so truly, “you can teach to do everything but love you.” There was a British bull-dog, white, with small eyes; so short-sighted as to be obliged to examine everything with his nose (which gave Austin a creeping up his back), and with a wicked, lowering, face; yet which bull-dog turned out, like most other British bulldogs, to be a good-natured, kind-hearted fellow, and a firm friend, as soon as he had (by smelling the calves of their legs, a nervous proceeding) found out his friends from his enemies.

And Austin, finding that the bull-dog, instead of

biting his legs, wagged his tail at him, and proposed to accompany him further, broke out into raptures.

"Miss Cecil, I have never seen such a collection of dogs as this! And I am a great fancier of dogs."

"You have not seen them nearly all yet," she said. "This is, I believe, the best collection of dogs in England; or rather, I should say, better than any in England, for we are in Wales. You know how they came here?"

"No."

"My poor brother chose to have the best dogs in England; it was a passion with him; and since his death, my father has chosen to pursue his hobby. You know about my brother's death?"

"Oh, yes," said Austin, who knew nothing at all about it, but who did what was possibly the best thing he could do, utter a *façon de parler* (for it was nothing more), and try to turn the subject. At the same time he reflected, that it would be well for young men like himself, not in society, before they went into a house, to inform themselves somewhat about the history of that house, to prevent mistakes.

"Do you really know about my brother, Mr. Elliot?" said Miss Cecil.

"Well, no," said Austin, "I do not, since you

ask me twice. Remember, I am only an undergraduate at Oxford, and that I knew nothing, even of Mr. Cecil, except that he was one of the first men in England, and had given such and such votes, until he asked me here."

"I like you very much," said she; "you are so well-bred, and have so little pretension. I only wanted to mention my poor brother, whom I hardly remember, to warn you what not to talk about with my father. He was drowned boating at Eton. And you will find that it is as well to know all this sort of thing in the world."

Miss Cecil, the oracle, was much younger than Austin; but she had been out two seasons, and knew a great deal of the world; and he was at the University and knew absolutely and entirely nothing. If he had, he would have known what a consummate fool he was to fall in love with her, recklessly to go on feeding his passion; and above all, what an utter fool he was to hope that it would have any other than one conclusion.

"I know nothing of the world, or about people, yet," he said, "I suppose the knowledge of people and their belongings will come to one in time. It seems tiresome to get it up. Do you know that

none of the best fellows who I know are up in that sort of thing. Now, there is Lord Charles Barty, he is coming on very well indeed ; but, mind you, I believe if you were to put him into a corner he would not be able to tell you who his grandmother's father was."

Miss Cecil laughed. "I daresay not," said she. "*I* know. His grandmother was a Leyton, daughter of Sir Robert Leyton, of Broadash. Leave the pedigrees to the women. One of the great uses of a woman in society is, I take it, to tell her husband who people are."

So she talked to him, as one would talk to an intelligent boy sent to one for a holiday ; and yet the fool loved on more madly than ever.

"Come on," she said, "and let us see the rest of the dogs ;" for this conversation took place at the fountain in the centre of the kennels, and they had only come up one avenue, and only seen one fourth of the dogs as yet.

And as they turned to go she said :

"I like you very much, as I told you before. And to prove to you how much I like you, I will give you, out of all these hundreds of beautiful dogs, the dog you choose--the dog you think that you will love

best; and I only annex one condition—that whenever your heart warms towards that dog, that you will think of me, and think how much I like you. I have heard a very great deal of you. I rather believe that you did not know of my existence before you came here. But I have been in love with you for a long time."

Miss Cecil and Eleanor had been friends and correspondents; Austin did not know this. He was not coxcomb enough to take her cool free-and-easy expressions as advances to himself, and yet he was foolish enough to think that they formed a basis of operations. He had hopes.

He was a great fool; but I would not have cared to write his history if he had not been. Let us be Jacobin, democratic, and revolutionary for a season, until our reason returns. If a man is thrown into intricate relations with a woman, however much his superior in rank, that man is justified, if he so please, in falling in love with that woman. A man may fly from a hopeless passion, and be miserable. Granted. A man may yield to a hopeless passion, and may behave like a gentleman, and keep it all in his own breast, and tell no one but the friend of his heart, and be miserable. Also granted. But if a man comes

to me and says, that although he was with such and such a woman, but didn't allow himself to fall in love with her because she was above him in rank, I choose to tell that man that he is no man at all, and no more knows what love means than a horse or a dog.

Now they began looking at the terriers. There was one snow-white English terrier of such amazing beauty, that Austin very nearly chose it, but fortunately did not. Then there were some black and tans, equal in beauty to the white; Dandy Dinmont terriers, as long and as lithe as otters; and pert, merry, sharp little Skyes; rough long-legged English fox terriers, which ran on three legs, like Scotch terriers, and held their heads on one side knowingly. Austin was more and more delighted every step. He knew all about every dog; but at the last he was stopped. He came across four little dogs, the like of which he had never seen before.

Little long-bodied, short-legged dogs, a dull blue-grey colour, with clouded black spots; sharp, merry little fellows.

"What dogs can these be, Miss Cecil?" he said.
"I am quite at fault."

"Cannot you guess? Why, they are turnspits,

and all with the turnspit peculiarity. The right eye is not of the same colour as the left. I suppose you will hardly see such dogs as these in England. Will you choose one?"

Although one of the queer merry little rogues begged at him, he said no. "They are a sight," he said, "a sight worth seeing, but I will not choose one. In an artistic point of view, they are ugly, and they suggest to me the blue dogs which the Chinese fatten for table. No. I hardly dare to say so, but of all the dogs here I would soonest have that incomparable white terrier. I have dreamed of such a dog as that, but I never saw such a one."

"It is hardly possible that you can have. He is yours with a thousand welcomes. I hope he may live long to remind you of me."

"I need no dog to do that," said Austin; "but I cannot take such a princely present."

She laughed. "It is done," she said; "the election is made for good or evil. Come and take possession."

The election, so terribly important as it turned out, was nearly made. Who could guess, on that happy summer's day, how much was to depend on the choosing of a dog?

" For the want of a nail the shoe was lost ;
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost ;
For the want of a horse the rider was lost ;
For the want of a rider a kingdom was lost."

If it were not that we knew that a tender, loving Father watches over us with all-seeing providence, each action of a prudent man's life would be accompanied with such a feeling of terror of ultimate consequences, that life would become a burden, and the grave rest ; or we should run, like the Turks, and some of the West country sects, into the opposite extreme of saying that it was all "Kismet," that it mattered not what we did.

The white terrier was so nearly chosen, in spite of Austin's strong repugnance to accept such a valuable present, that they had turned, and Austin's hands were eager to seize the beautiful little animal, and call him his own, when, in the wood behind them, there was a wild jubilant bark ; in another instant there was a rush past them, as of an eagle coming through a forest ; in the next, a dog, different to any they had seen before, was madly, joyously careering round and round them in ever-narrowing circles ; and in another he was leaping on both of them, and covering them with caresses.

But he saw that Austin was a stranger, and paused to look at him, and after a moment he reared up against him, and said with his beautiful soft hazel eyes, as Austin thought, "Choose me, choose me, and I will follow you through it all, even to the very end."

It was a most beautiful Scotch sheep dog, black and tan and white, with a delicate smooth head, the hair of which began to wave about the ears, until it developed into a deep mane upon the shoulders. The author has described such a dog before. The Scotch sheep dog is the highest development of the brute creation, in beauty, in sagacity, and in other qualities, which one dares, by leave of Messieurs of the Holy Office, to call moral. This was the most beautiful dog of that variety ever seen. If the reader wishes to realize the dog to himself he can do so thus. In Landseer's picture of "The Shepherd's Bible," the dog which is standing up is very like him; though the dog I am describing is drawn from the life, and from a handsomer dog than he.

"This is the dog for me," cried Austin. "Why, you beauty! Miss Cecil, I would give anything for this dog. Just look at his eyes, will you. Can I have him? Does he belong to any one?"

"Yes," she said, laughing. "He belongs to you. He is worth all the white terriers that ever were born. I like you the better for your choice of Robin."

At this moment a harsh voice behind them said :

"How d'ye do, Miss Cecil? By Jove! that dog is a deuced clever dog. He began by pitching into me, but when your father said, 'Go find, Robin,' he became docile, and brought me on your track like an Indian. Is he yours?"

"He is Mr. Elliot's. How do you do, Captain Hertford?" said Miss Cecil, very coldly.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN HERTFORD, the man who had just found the group, was a man whose personal appearance requires some slight notice, and but very slight. He was a very big, thick-set man. He had a broad red face, the principal features of which were lowering bushy eyebrows, beneath which were cruel, deep-sunk, light blue eyes; and a thick, coarse mouth, too big to be entirely hidden by the moustache which met his deep red whiskers. The expression of his face was, towards men, scowling and insolent; what it was towards women I know not, but should fancy that, if it was intended to express admiration, it was more repulsive than his ordinary look of defiance and ill temper.

He looked with intense eager curiosity at Austin — Austin did not look with much curiosity at him,

or he would have seen him bite his lip impatiently. He might have been flattered had he heard the Captain say to himself, "Consume the young beggar, he *is* infernally handsome."

"You are unexpected, Captain Hertford," said Miss Cecil; "but not the less welcome. Whence have you come?"

"I have been at Brussels with Mewstone. I stayed a day or two there after him. He got hold of the old Countess Dentelles, and carried her off to Malines with him. They seem to have been pretty busy those two days. The bill has come to me in the course of business."

"Is it very large?" said Miss Cecil, laughing.

"A little over thirty thousand francs."

"That is very extravagant."

"I don't know," said Captain Hertford. "I don't think it is so very bad. Remember what it must have cost to get the old countess to leave her box at the St. Hubert, with Levasseur starring from Paris, and pack off to Malines with him, with her rheumatism and her monkey. When I looked at the bill, I pointed to an item of five thousand francs, and I said to him, 'That's the old woman's share;' and he laughed and said, 'Yes.' He got

her uncommon cheap, I think, at that. She is the best judge in Europe. They would have cheated him horribly if she hadn't gone with him."

Austin had no more notion what they were talking about than the man in the moon. He looked at them both with wonder. Miss Cecil began again :

" Well, on the whole, he could not have done better. I suppose the poor old devotee will put it on the shoulders of some Bambino or another. Poor old lady !"

" What a delightful rummage she must have had. There must have been a great excitement at Malines at her appearance."

" What detained you in Brussels, Captain Hertford ?"

" Well, a very unpleasant affair. An affair touching my personal honour."

" Have you been out again ?" she asked, turning sharply upon him.

" No," said Captain Hertford. " A young fellow, an Englishman, had forged Mewstone's name to a large amount. I followed him to Namur, to see whether I could recover anything. But when I got to Namur he had escaped me. My honour

was concerned in catching him, for he was my acquaintance, not Mewstone's."

"Did you follow him no farther?" she asked.

"There was no need. By the bye, Mewstone is in London, and will be here the day after to-morrow."

"Is any one there to act for him, as the Countess Dentelles did at Malines?"

"No," said Captain Hertford. "I turned him into Rundell and Bridges, as I would turn a young colt into a clover-field. They won't cheat him. It is all convertible property. Will you introduce me to Mr. Elliot?"

She did so. Captain Hertford did not scowl on him, but smiled. Austin thought possibly that his smile was not a pleasant one, but he did not care for that. This man had been talking for ten minutes to this woman, and Austin had not the least idea of what they had been talking about. This man could talk to her and amuse her, when he sat mumchance. He would make himself a pupil of this man. This must be one of the men of the world his father talked of. But had all the men of the world scowling eyebrows, and great coarse mouths, like this one?

Austin laughed as he asked himself this question. He had seen other men of the world. His father, and Mr. Cecil, and the seven other Lords of the Shoals and Quicksands, quite different in appearance to Captain Hertford. He did not like the look of this gentleman, but he would be his pupil. He was as eager for Captain Hertford's acquaintance, as Captain Hertford was for his.

They walked back, all three towards the house, and Miss Cecil went in. Captain Hertford proposed that they should extend their walk, and smoke a cigar.

Austin was delighted. As they turned on the broad gravel walk, Austin noticed for the first time that the dog Robin was at his heels. His tail was down, and his ears were down. He was waiting for orders from his new master. The dog had *taken to him*. What that means I cannot tell you. I don't know, and you don't know, any more than this, that sometimes dogs take to men, and sometimes they don't. And we shall none of us know any more about the matter until the kye come hame.

Apparently, also, Captain Hertford had taken to Austin. His sudden affection for Austin is not nearly so mysterious a business as that of the dog's. We

shall find out the reason of *that* before the kye come hame.

"Where shall we go?" said Captain Hertford.

"Anywhere you like," said Austin, with the frankness of a boy. "I want to talk to you. I want to make your acquaintance. And any one place is as good as another for that."

Captain Hertford turned and looked at him as he said this. There was almost a smile on his face, as he heard Austin say this; but when he looked at him, and saw how handsome he was, he scowled again. It is just possible that this was an important point in Captain Hertford's life. Austin, with his fresh innocence, might have won him back to better things possibly. Who knows? But Austin stood between him and the light.

Hertford walked in, puffing his cigar. He began the conversation.

"By the bye, Elliot, you know the Hiltons, don't you?"

"Infinitely well."

"Then I am afraid that the beginning of our acquaintance won't be very pleasant. I was detained in town on their account."

"Indeed."

“ Yes. You heard me speaking about an affair concerning a young Englishman, which detained me at Brussels.”

“ Yes.”

“ Did you ever know Robert Hilton ? ”

“ Yes ; at Eton, poor lad. But I have never seen him since.”

“ You will never see him any more.”

“ Oh ! Captain Hertford, don’t say that. Do you mean to say he is dead ? ”

“ If you are going into the world, you must learn to bear these things with composure, Elliot. Now, lean against that rock, and look me in the face. Robert Hilton committed suicide the week before last, at Namur.”

“ Suicide ! ”

“ Yes, suicide.”

“ God forgive me. I was going to say, that he would not have been so bold ; so —— Poor lad. Yet, I don’t know. Was there anything new against him ? ”

“ Yes. I will tell you what there was against him. He forged Mewstone’s name.”

“ Good God ! ”

“ Yes. And when he thought it must be dis-

covered, fled to Namur. I sent a man after him. A letter from Hilton, to me, crossed him on the road. It announced his intention of making away with himself. I was furious. I thought it was a miserable ruse to escape. I followed my friend to Namur. And there I found the whole business unfortunately true."

"Does Mr. Hilton know of this?" said Austin, eagerly.

"Yes, I broke it to him."

"How did he take it?"

"Very quietly. You know the whole thing is very sad, and very lamentable; but Hilton is a man of the world. And with regard to this boy, the bitterness of death was passed. You must know that. He was a *mauvais sujet*. I don't mean to say that the old man was not deucedly cut up, and all that sort of thing, but he took it very quietly."

"Poor Eleanor," said Austin.

"You mean Miss Hilton," said Captain Hertford. "Well, she was very much cut up. But she will be consoled. You see this leaves her in undisputed possession of nine thousand a year at her father's death."

"She! she weigh nine thousand, or nine millions

against her brother's life! You don't know Eleanor Hilton, Captain Hertford."

"Nor you either, I fancy," said Captain Hertford, laughing. "Did I say she weighed money against her brother's life? Don't I know that she would pitch it all to the dogs to have him back again? All I said was, that she would console herself; and you will find that inexorably true. So she will."

"Indeed," said Austin. "I suppose she will. After all, the poor fellow was a sad source of anxiety to them. It is perhaps better she should forget him."

"What a child you are, Elliot," said Captain Hertford. "Five minutes or less ago you were ready to fight me—I saw it in your eyes—for saying she would console herself. Now you endorse it, repeat it, and say it were better she should do so."

This was what some gentleman in "Martin Chuzzlewit" calls "Dreadful true." Austin had the good taste to acknowledge it.

"I ought," he said, "to go home, I think."

"Why?"

"I don't know. I should like to be near poor Eleanor in her trouble."

"Are you caught there then?" said Captain Hertford, turning the other way, and adding, "I wonder if he has any head of grouse here."

"I," said Austin, "Oh dear, no."

"I thought you had been."

"No," said Austin, blushing and hesitating, "Eleanor Hilton and I have been brought up like brother and sister, you know."

"Oh, indeed. I had heard that you and she were very good friends. What a beautiful girl this Miss Cecil is."

"Is she not?"

"I suppose you are not caught there?"

"After twenty-four hours," Austin had voice enough to say; "No, I don't think I am."

"Then you must be a great fool, Elliot," said Captain Hertford.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE cannot help doubting whether or no Austin would have written to Eleanor about his new passion, even had she not been in trouble about her brother's death. At all events, he did not. He merely wrote her a kind affectionate letter, full of condolence ; but said no word of Miss Cecil.

This was an exception to his general rule. For he usually fell in love with a fresh young lady, more or less ineligible, every three months ; and invariably told Eleanor all about it. So that poor Eleanor used to get into a state of confusion ; and was in the habit of confounding the last young lady, and the last but one, to Austin's great vexation.

But he wrote to Lord Charles Barty. He told him about Miss Cecil, her beauty, her wit, her grace, and how he was madly in love with her ; and he

directed the letter to Turin. For in this year the Duke and Duchess of Cheshire invaded Italy, with an overwhelming force, exacting tribute from the various people over whose necks their chariot wheels passed, taking with them also scholars and experts, to show them the best things in the way of art, on which to lay their hands, as did Buonaparte, but, unlike Napoleon, paying for them, in hard cash, about twenty per cent. above their actual value.

Lord Charles Barty had a long letter written to Austin, and ready to send, when he got Austin's. Lord Charles's letter was full of flippant good-humoured nonsense. He had tried to whet his wits upon everything he had seen, and it is quite possible that he had made an indifferent success. We shall never know about this, however, for when he got Austin's letter he burnt his own, wrote a new one to Austin, an eager hasty one, of only six or seven lines, put it in the post-office himself, walked up and down until he saw the Diligence depart for Chambery, and then bit his nails and stamped when he considered that his letter would be too late to do any good.

Lord Charles Barty was not very clever: in fact, the Barty's are not a clever family. But they have

higher qualities than cleverness. “In the house of Waverley the qualities of honour and generosity are hereditary.” So it may be said about the Barty’s. Lord Charles Barty would have telegraphed to his friend Austin ; but, alas ! in 1844, the only piece of telegraph working was from London to Slough, and from Vauxhall to Woking ; consequently there was none to Turin. He would have given up his holiday, and posted home, but he knew he would be too late. He could only fret and fume, until he told his father, who looked very grave, and said, that either Mr. Cecil, or Austin, or Miss Cecil, must be very much to blame.

And meanwhile poor Austin continued making a fool of himself with Miss Cecil. Her manner was very affectionate towards him. She had known Eleanor Hilton, having stayed with her at a country house, and she had done what every one else did who saw Eleanor, got very deeply attached to her. This she told to Austin the very first morning of their acquaintance ; but she had, of course, not told him something else. To wit, that some one had told her of Eleanor’s having been engaged to marry a young gentleman, by name Elliot, ever since she could talk. She was very anxious to see the man

on whom so much of Eleanor's happiness depended. And she was delighted and charmed to find him so worthy of her. That was all.

And so he walked and rode and drove and read with her day after day, getting more hopelessly entangled. Captain Hertford was very busy, or seemed to be, with her father, and left Austin to cavalier Miss Cecil. Mr. Cecil and Captain Hertford did really seem busy; but if they had not been, the latter would have contrived to leave them alone together. He had his reasons.

Once in the week or ten days, he went out with the Captain to walk idly across some farms to see some improvements. The bailiff was with them. A farmer, catching sight of them at a long distance, made towards them, and then, hat in hand, and addressing Austin every tenth word as "my lord," began with Welsh volubility to lay a case about draining improvements before him, and pray his assistance. He had gone on ever so far before the steward had time to stop him in a few hurried words of Welsh. The man scowled on Austin, turned on his heel, and departed.

When he was alone with Captain Hertford, Austin said to him, "It is a very curious thing, do you

know ; but in the few days I have been here, that same thing has happened in different ways—not once, but a dozen times. I met a man in the pass of Llanberis, when I was coming here with Mr. Cecil, who first of all asked, with the greatest *empressement*, to be introduced to me ; and then when he heard my name, looked very much inclined to kick me. I hope no one will do that. Has any man called Elliot done anything very bad in these parts ? ”

“ Not that I know of. But I will tell you what I think. I fancy, mind, that seeing a handsome young dandy like you, brought down here by Mr. Cecil—mind, I only fancy—that the people think that you are going to marry Miss Cecil.”

“ Then why,” said poor Austin, “ the moment they hear my name, do they find out that I am not the man ? ”

This was awkward. Captain Hertford laughed, and said, “ I am sure I don’t know.” In another moment, Austin would, according to all laws of probability, have asked him whether Miss Cecil was engaged to any one. Possibly Captain Hertford knew that, for he said, before Austin had time to say anything, “ Miss Cecil tells me that she gave you

the choice of all the dogs in the kennel. Rather a compliment, eh? What the deuce made you choose that infernal sheep-dog?"

Austin was on his own dunghill immediately. Captain Hertford knew he would be. "Why did I choose him?" he said. "Because he is the best specimen in the kennel."

"The most perfect specimen!" said the artful Captain, scornfully.

"Yes."

"What! a finer specimen than that glorious white terrier? You must be a fool, Elliot. Why, there is not such another dog in the world as that white terrier. Snow-white as he seems, you can see, in certain lights, the markings of a perfect black and tan under his white hair. There is no dog like him in England."

"He is only an Albino black and tan," said Elliot, scornfully. "He is a beautiful beast, and he is worth thirty guineas, I allow; but do you know the points of a Scotch colley? eh!"

"Can't say I do," said Captain Hertford. "Can't say, either, that I know the points of a costermonger's donkey."

"Ah!" said Austin, "then you see I do. I know

the points of any dog under the sun. This dog Robin is perfect in all points. Here, sir! here! Look at him."

Captain Hertford looked at Robin, but Robin did not look at Captain Hertford. He caught his eye for a moment, and then laid his leaf-like ears back, drooped his tail, went behind Austin, and loped, or lurked, in his walk, which means, that he moved the two legs which were on the same side of him together.

Captain Hertford laughed, and changed the subject. He had done what he wanted. He had prevented Austin from asking an awkward question. There were three or four days to spare, by his calculations. He saw that Austin had fallen deeply in love, poor fool, with Miss Cecil; he wanted him to get deeper and deeper in that hopeless passion. Eleanor Hilton was heiress to nine thousand a year. He had an introduction to Eleanor through her brother's unfortunate death. Austin must be entangled with some one else for a time.

Captain Hertford, however, was playing a very dangerous game. He was "necessary man" to Lord Mewstone. He had been sent to Tyn y Rhaiadr as his *avant courier*. He had found Austin

there, in the very act of falling in love with Miss Cecil.

He had come to England from Brussels, with the idea that Eleanor and her nine thousand a year were worth getting at. He had heard that Austin was supposed to be engaged to her. He had come to Tyn y Rhaiadr, and found him, of all men in the world, there, and he had acted as above. His plans were not well developed, and might be changed ; but he had no doubt of this—that if he let him commit himself deeply to Miss Cecil, it must be better for his plans in the long run.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUT, on the eighth day, Austin's eyes were opened to the true state of the case in this manner:—

It was Sunday morning; Mr. Cecil and Captain Hertford had not gone to church, pleading that the service was in Welsh. Miss Cecil had gone, however, and Austin had gone with her.

They returned by the path which led past the waterfall, where he had first seen her, and there, upon the giddy bridge, in the presence of the great sheet of rushing foam, he knew his fate. On the rocky path above them stood a tall and handsome man. Miss Cecil gave a little cry when she caught sight of him; and when Austin saw her two little gloved hands trembling out from under her shawl towards him, he knew everything. The eager movement of those little hands was as stern a death-blow

to his hope, as though the man who stood above her, and held out his arms to her, had taken her in them, and cast her into the seething cataract a hundred feet below.

Alas, poor Austin! He was a gentleman, and looked earnestly at the waterfall, lest he should see the meeting. When he looked round again, they were standing side by side, radiant, handsome, and joyous; and he could see that she was talking about him.

So he went up to them, and was presented by Miss Cecil to Lord Mewstone.

Every one had known of the engagement between Miss Cecil and Lord Mewstone for months—every one except, apparently, poor ignorant Austin. All Mr. Cecil's enormous estates went to his daughter. These estates bordered, in two counties, on those of Lord Mewstone. His marriage with Miss Cecil would well-nigh double his already great wealth. Mr. Cecil had refused a peerage, because he saw that it would take place, and it was not worth while leaving the House of Commons—having no male issue, and being in full work—at least not at present. There was as much land as goes to make some independent states. There were deep political considerations at stake in this great match. It was an affair of enor-

mous importance, and here was poor ignorant self-confident little Austin, flying his kite in the middle of it all with a calm unconsciousness of the fact that the only human being *there* who guessed his secret, Captain Hertford, was at one time laughing at, at another time admiring his amazing impudence.

“By Gad!” said Captain Hertford to himself, “what the deuce is it? Is it innocence, or is it mere vanity? If I had had that amount of unconscious impudence early in life, I might have done better.”

People said that this marriage of Lord Mewstone with Fanny Cecil was a family and political arrangement. If so, it was an uncommonly fortunate one, for each of them loved the ground which the other walked on. Let us wish them good-bye for ever. Our way lies in a very different direction. We must quit this happy house among the Welsh hills; but I am sorry to say we must take away Captain Hertford with us, and keep him with us altogether, or nearly so.

Austin’s adieux were easily made. The poor miserable lad had only to say that he would take the opportunity of travelling as far as Chester with Captain Hertford (there was no railway farther than

Chester in 1844), for that he must join his reading party. He received a hearty farewell from every one, and jumped into the carriage beside Captain Hertford, to go to Bangor.

And when Captain Hertford looked at him, he saw that his face was changed since yesterday. Yesterday it was the face of a remarkably handsome young man, with merry blue eyes. To-day it was the same; the features as regular as those of Buonaparte or Castlereagh; the firm cut mouth, with the lower lip slightly pouting; the short curling brown hair, the pure complexion, were all there; and yet there was a difference since yesterday. Austin, as he sat in the carriage, was as handsome as Buonaparte or Castlereagh, but had now, though his face was at rest, a look which Lord Whitworth must have seen on the face of the one, and Mr. Raikes on the face of the other—a look of angry, furious defiance. It was expressed in only one feature—in the eyes. Austin's great blue eyes, always set a trifle too near his eyebrows, were now prominent, surrounded with a black ring; and whenever Captain Hertford spoke to him, he turned them on him angrily, though his speech was gentle. Those eyes seemed to say, “How dare you disturb me?” And as Captain Hertford

looked on them, that veteran warrior and bully said to himself, "The fellow will do. He has power."

And he remembered the look of those eyes, when Austin was in that humour. The old calm look soon came back again, and Captain Hertford never saw that look in them any more until the 16th of May, 1846. The night on which the Corn Law Bill was read the third time in the Commons.

But after a very few miles, scarcely more than one, a change took place. Austin was disappointed and humiliated beyond what one can well conceive, and he also fancied, and most properly, that he had been deceived by Captain Hertford. But the great good heart, which, in spite of all weakness and conceit, dictated all his actions, told him that he must speak to some one. There was no one but this red-faced, red-haired soldier, with his sly little eyes, his coarse moustache, and his great gluttonous mouth; and so he must talk to him. He had the strongest repugnance to him personally. Yes. He had deceived him and played with him, and hurt his pride. But—Well—the man was a man. The fellow could ride, for all his little deep-set eyes. Not only could ride, but would ride; not only would ride, but had ridden, so deep into a regiment of infuriated

Afghans, that the squadron, which hated him while they followed him, could see nothing of him but the sword which flickered about his head.

So he was a man at all events, though he might be only a led Captain of Lord Mewstone's. And Austin must speak to some one. And so the expression of the eyes changed altogether when he next spoke to Captain Hertford. He had the dog Robin's head between his knees, and was smoothing his round forehead, when he looked up suddenly, and said to Captain Hertford, in a low voice—

“ I was in love with that woman.”

Captain Hertford looked uneasily at the coachman, but Austin had calculated on that, and spoken very low. Captain Hertford said—

“ Well! well! and are in a rage with me, are you not? ”

Austin was easily disarmed; he said quietly, “ No; I am in a rage with no one but myself. What right has a poor ignorant boy, like me, to be in a rage with a man of the world like you? ”

Captain Hertford turned suddenly upon him, and then turned suddenly away again. “ I thought,” he said, “ that you might be angry because I did not tell you that she was engaged to Lord M.”

"No. You were not called on to do so. What a fool I must have been on the other hand, eh?"

"Well, I don't know there: you are singularly handsome, and very ambitious. That sort of thing happens very often. There was Charley Bates and Miss Dawkins, for instance. Charley had led a deuce of a life with her uncle, old Fagin, and Jack Dawkins, her brother, a fellow that every one knew, but who had gone to the devil lately. Old Fagin got hung, no one ever found out what for, and Charley hadn't got a rap. So what does he do. Makes up to Miss Dawkins, who had come into the old man's money (her mother was a Moss—one of the Monmouth-street Mosses—who had married Fagin's brother, about which there was a story, sir, and a devilish queer one, if you come to that) and married her, and made her cut the shop, and went into a quiet farm in the grass shires," &c. &c.

Mutatis nominibus, this was about the value of the consolation which Captain Hertford administered to Austin, as they drove to Bangor. It was possibly as good as any other; for the way of consoling a gentleman in Austin's circumstances has got to be discovered, as far as the author is aware.

When Austin got to town, he found a letter from

his father. Mr. Elliot had not returned from Liverpool. Certain Brethren, feeling that they had quite as good a right to a holiday as My Lords of the Shoals and Quicksands, had made the discovery that the man Elliot had taken all the Shoals' Lords up in their yacht, and that they were (no doubt) tampering with the buoys on the Sarn Padrig, which buoys were their business. It was intolerable. They started in *their* yacht in hot pursuit, overtook the miscreants in Beaumanris bay, had a wrangle, and then steamed off to the island of Mull, the two yachts racing till the boilers primed, to see whether the new lighthouse had been painted red, according to Mr. Elliot's suggestion, or white, according to their (the Trinity Brothers') orders. But they had a pleasant time of it, and dined mutually with infinite good fellowship, in spite of all this divine wrath.

Austin was still smiling over this letter, when he took up another. It was in Eleanor's handwriting, and ran thus—

“ If you do come home unexpectedly, dear Austin, pray come and see me at once. Father is very ill.

E. H.”

Austin rang for his servant, and asked when the note had come.

"Not half an hour ago," the man said. Austin started at once.

The Hiltons lived in Wilton Crescent. He hurried there as quick as he could.

He was shown into the dining-room. Of course his first question was, "How is Mr. Hilton?"

He was worse. Miss Hilton would come down at once however.

There was a footstep in the passage he knew full well, and he looked out of the window. He felt disinclined to see Eleanor for some reason ; he would have to tell her of this foolish business about Miss Cecil, and was disinclined to begin. He heard the door quietly opened and the gentle rustle of a woman's dress, and he knew that Eleanor Hilton was in the room, so he turned and confronted this terrible lady, and felt his heart beat the quicker as he did so.

There stood before him a tiny delicate dark woman, dressed very neatly, in very quiet colours. She was like a little fragile brown moth, a thing you may crush with your finger ; and the wee little elfin thing stood before him with her hands crossed for an instant, without speaking. If Austin had looked at the eager twitching of those hands he would have known something even then. He knew what that motion

of the hands meant a day or two before, when he saw Miss Cecil raise her hands towards Lord Mewstone; but he did not notice it now, for he was looking into her face.

Was it a handsome face?—ah, no! Was it a beautiful face?—ah, dear, yes! Her hair was banded closely down on each side of her great forehead, and her eyes, her clear large hazel eyes, said as plainly as words could have said to him, “I am a poor little body and very ugly, but I will love you if you will let me.” All her features were very regular but very small, and though her upper lip was sharp and her chin was short, the mouth was the best feature in her face, though it might be set too near her nose, and too near her chin, yet it was an exceeding tender mouth; although it was as sharp cut as Sarah Siddons’, it helped almost as much as the gentle eyes and the open forehead to make you say to yourself, “What a dear fragile loveable little body it is.”

The Author wonders whether or no it would not have been better if he had said at first that she was like a gentle bright-eyed little brown mouse. It is possible that it may be so.

“I knew,” she said, coming up and taking his hands, “that you would come to me.”

"Dear sister," he said, looking into her face, "of course I came to you. How is he?"

"Worse."

"Who is here?"

"No one but Aunt Maria."

"Isn't she too much for him? You know *I* have a profound respect for Aunt Maria, but at the same time you know——"

At this moment Aunt Maria, always profoundly penetrated with the idea that young people should not be left too long alone together, came into the room.

She was a big, red-faced woman, with a Roman nose and a protruding chin. A woman of presence—of such powerful presence that when she entered the room at one end and you were at the other, with your back towards her, you knew it. Was it merely by the vibration of the air, one wonders, or is there, after all, such a thing as animal magnetism?

She was a stern woman, with bangles and brooches and a shawl. She revolved in her orbit, surrounded by an atmosphere of Patchouli, calculated, by people curious in astronomy, as being from eleven to twelve times greater than her own diameter.

The moment that Austin found himself within the atmosphere, he spoke, and asked her how she did?

She kept her nose in the air, and motioned Eleanor out of the room.

"My poor brother is dying," she said ; "and, my dear Austin, he wants to see your father. What is to be done?"

"Why, we can do nothing, dear Miss Hilton ; my father is in the Hebrides. Let me see him."

"It might be unwise ; I really don't know what to say. Whether or no a strange face—"

"Mine is not a strange face, Miss Hilton."

"No, no ! but I am in terror ; it is your father he wants. When did you come ?"

"Just now ; Eleanor wrote for me."

"She did, did she ! It was giving you a great deal of trouble," she said, looking very angry.

Now Aunt Maria did not want Austin to see old Hilton, if she could decently help it, for these simple reasons. He had been raving to see Mr. Elliot ; and one of his great anxieties was, as they gathered from his talk, that Austin should marry Eleanor. Aunt Maria was very strongly opposed to this. She was selfish. She had great power with Eleanor, and Eleanor would be an heiress. Eleanor *might* never marry at all, which would be for her benefit, and if she did marry she might marry a better man than Austin.

She was a silly woman as well as a selfish one. She was taken by surprise at Austin's appearance, and not knowing very well what to do, did what silly women generally do when they don't see their way—that is to say, *did* nothing, but opposed everything. So she tried to prevent Austin from seeing Mr. Hilton. She failed, as we shall see ; and though the interview was not very important at first sight, yet it had some slight effect on the course of the story. Aunt Maria's intrigue against Austin (in which she was, according to her light, conscientious) grew to be much more important afterwards. She was a foolish woman, but her obstinacy, and her want of sensibility, gave her a terrible power. Greater and stronger people than dear Eleanor have submitted to an Aunt Maria for very peace sake.

Austin would never have seen Mr. Hilton, I believe, if it had not happened that Sir Rufus James, the doctor, had happened to be upstairs, and had come into the dining-room on his way to his carriage. Austin looked in his kind gentle face, and ignoring Aunt Maria, said—

“ Sir Rufus, look here. Mr. Hilton wants to see my father, and he is in the Hebrides. Don't you think I might go up and see him ? ”

The doctor looked kindly on him, and said, "Certainly. It may please him. It will do no man any harm to look at you, my boy. You have got your mother's eyes. Yes, go and see him."

And so Aunt Maria was vanquished, and Austin went upstairs.

It was hours before Mr. Hilton was sensible again. He was lying in an uneasy slumber. Austin came into the room, went out again, and waited.

At last the message came. He went in and found the old man sitting up in bed. At first he thought he was sensible, but the first words Mr. Hilton showed him that he was wrong. They showed him that Mr. Hilton mistook him for his father.

"Ah, Elliot," he said, "I thought you would not miss coming to see me at the last—you who stuck to me through it all. And so you have gone before, eh?"

Austin muttered something or another.

"Yes, you are like the others, you speak inarticulately. I can hardly catch what you say. I shall be able to hear you better soon. I could not hear them very well. Why were you not here with them?"

Austin again said something. He was beginning to get awe-struck.

"It was such a pleasant meeting," continued the old man. "It was in the middle of the night. My daughter Eleanor heard me laughing with them, and she came and sat on the bed, just where she is sitting now, and listened to us three. Did you not, my darling?"

Eleanor said, Yes, that she had sat on the bed at half-past twelve for some time, and she grew pale.

"Yes," he said, "she sat there; and who do you think sat in those two chairs on each side of the bed?"

"I can't tell," faltered Austin, who began to feel his hair creep. For the old man before him was talking as clearly as ever, and yet he was delirious, and did not know him.

"Can't tell, foolish man! Why, Jenkinson sat in that chair, and Canning in that, and my daughter heard us laughing, all three of us, and came to listen. Is it not so, little one?"

"I heard you laughing, dear father, and came and sat on the bed to listen."

"See. She confirms me. Jenkinson had on his brown coat, and Canning was laughing at it. But the strange thing was, the alteration in them. They did not look haggard, and anxious, and worn old

men, as they looked when we saw them last, but they had round merry beardless faces, just as you have now, and as we all four of us had at Christchurch fifty-five weary years agone.

" I mentioned that unhappy Austerlitz affair to them, but they said that was forgiven years ago ; that where they were everything was forgiven, and that the tears were wiped from all eyes. I will try to sleep a little before I wake and die."

After this he leant against his pillow for a minute, and then, with an anxious look, turned towards Austin, and said—

" Elliot ! Elliot ! are you there still ? "

Austin answered promptly, " Yes." It was no use undeeceiving him now.

" I was nearly," said Mr. Hilton, " forgetting the most important part of it. Elliot, do you think your son will marry my daughter, Eleanor ? "

Austin dared say nothing.

" I can't hear you. I wish he would. She is ugly, but she is amazingly gentle and good. She will have an immense deal of money. He is good, clever, and ambitious. With her money, he will be Prime Minister if he sticks to work. I wish it could be managed. can't hear you."

" I put the case to Jenkinson last night. He said she was pretty ; but he is a fool, she is not. He said that he might do anything in the world with her money. Speak louder."

" Without her money he will be an office-hunter. He may have the world at his feet with my daughter's money. The doctor told me that that old rat, Cecil, had got him home, to throw him against that handsome daughter of his, and use him as a foil to bring Mewstone to the point. You must know, Elliot, that he is only fooling the poor boy ; but if he marries my girl he may have his revenge on fifty prigs like Mewstone. See to it. See to it. Good night."

We have slightly sketched Mr. Hilton's career, and this was the end of it. He fell asleep, and awoke to die.

Let the cunning, avaricious, yet generous and high-minded old man sleep in peace. He made one terrible mistake in life—his treasonable investment in the French Funds. He said on his death-bed that " Jenkinson " had forgiven him. I dare say it is true.

CHAPTER IX.

So after Austin went home, when poor Mr. Hilton was dead, he found these two sentences ringing in his ears—"He might be Prime Minister with Eleanor's money," and "That old rat, Cecil, had him there as a foil to bring Mewstone to the point."

About the first of these sentences I have nothing to say; about the second I have this to say—that whoever put that into the dying man's head told, unwittingly, perhaps, a very great falsehood. You know that from what has gone before. If ever there was a love-match between two folks, that match was between Lord and Lady Mewstone.

We have very little more to do with them, or with people in their rank of life. Austin was getting out of his depth, and we must follow him. But Austin was bred to ambition from his cradle, and that visit

to Mr. Cecil's house, combined with one sentence which Mr. Hilton let fall on his deathbed, influenced that ambition, whatever there may have been of it at that time, tenfold, although after the one great effort of his life that ambition went to sleep again.

For he began to think, "Who was this Lord Mewstone, to come cranking in that style? and who was he, Austin Elliot, that a cunning old man of the world should use such a stinging, coarse sentence about him as that . . . *

He was both handsomer and cleverer than Lord Mewstone; he knew *that* very well, as did every one else. He had some private fortune. What was there in a young fellow in his position which made these men of the world treat with contempt, the idea that he should marry her? She came of an old county family, hitherto not ennobled, so did he. Her family had certainly laid house to house and field to field. His family had done rather the contrary.

There was no earthly reason for it save this, that the world—that world in the dread of whose opinion his father had brought him up—wouldn't hear of such a thing. And then he began to say, "What

* I have abstained from printing that sentence: it is as well to avoid unnecessary coarseness.

right had the world?" and so on. He had been a submissive young whelp hitherto, but the world had (as he thought) tried to take his bone from him, and he growled. But, like a good dog, he soon went to kennel, and behaved himself.

Another speech of the old man's still lingered pleasantly in his ears, "He might be Prime Minister." That was very pleasant to think of. He might be a greater man than that prig Mewstone still. His degree would be a high one, there was no doubt of that. The world was before him, and all that sort of thing; but the old man had annexed one condition to his being Prime Minister, and that was, that he should have Eleanor's money.

And so he took a resolution, not, I hope, unworthy of him. A fortnight after Mr. Hilton's funeral, he ordered his horse to be saddled; he mounted it, whistled to Robin, and rode off through the pleasant lanes and commons of Surrey towards Esher, where Eleanor was staying, accompanied by her aunt Maria.

Sometimes, under very happy influences, men who have just had a terrible disappointment in love, will so far forget it as to whistle, and, to outward eyes, appear for a short time as if they had forgotten it.

Such was the case now, as Austin rode along the deep, over-arching lanes, and past the pleasant village greens, with his dog bounding before him, and looking back to see if he were coming.

He had not ridden very far before he came to a deep, dark lane, with a silver ford at the lower end, and a clacking mill, with a pretty flower garden, and bees. It was a very beautiful place, and as he stopped to look at it, he heard a horseman riding quickly down the lane towards him.

He turned, and saw approaching him, on a noble horse, a young man in white trousers, gallantly dressed, who waved his hand to him. Austin took off his hat and waved it in return. The next moment, the new comer was beside him, and their hands were locked together.

“ Dear Austin ! ” said the one.

“ My dear old fellow ! ” said Austin.

Perhaps the miller’s daughter, looking out slyly from behind the sunny flower-beds, faint with wall-flowers, at these two noble young men, who rode,

“ A bow-shot from her bower eaves,”

in the summer sunshine, said to herself, that they were the handsomest and noblest pair of brothers

she had ever seen. Perhaps she talked too much about them walking home from church next Sunday with her sweetheart, and made him sulky about them, until he and she kissed and made it up again on the Sabbath eventide, between the tangled hedges of dogrose and honeysuckle, under the whispering elm-trees. Who knows? But whether this happened or not, she might have walked all England through, and not found a handsomer pair of young men than they.

The young man who had overtaken Austin was Lord Charles Barty, the friend of his heart, as like Austin in mind as he was in features. Their friendship had begun at school, and had never waned, had never had a shadow cast over it as yet, and it lasted on to the very end, just the same, without let or hindrance, till the whole business was done and finished, and people began to take their partners for the next dance.

After describing Austin, there is hardly much need to describe his friend, for they were not unlike in face at this time. They were both blonde, handsome boys, really nothing more. Not a hair on either of their chins which they dared (not being in the cavalry) to let grow. If both faces had ever

developed, we should, I think, have found that Lord Charles's face was the most aquiline of the two, and that his eyebrows were more lofty. But there was not much character in either of their faces just now. It would require, as any one might see, a great deal of the padding to come off those faces, before you began to see the death's head underneath.

"I know where you are going to, old fellow," said Lord Charles, as they rode together. "The butler told me, and I came on after you. I am glad you are going there."

"I am only going, Charles, to prevent my ever going again, perhaps."

"Do you mean to say that you are going to give up Eleanor Hilton?" said the other, looking serious.

Charles told him what had passed at Mr. Hilton's deathbed.

Lord Charles rode in silence a little way, and at last said :

"You can't be wrong, Austin, because you are acting honourably. But is there nothing else you have not told me of?"

"Of course there is. Your letter came too late, and all the mischief was done. All the whole business was inextricably entangled (he used four or five

participle, which would not read well, and so we put it like that) before your letter arrived. And besides, before your letter came, Mewstone was there, and I saw it all."

"I am so sorry, by Gad! What a nuisance it was you didn't know," said Lord Charles.

"Old Hilton said, on his deathbed, that Mr. Cecil had taken me there to make Mewstone jealous."

"Who said that, Austin?" said Lord Charles.

"Old Mr. Hilton, on his deathbed!"

"Well, '*de mortuis*,' &c. But he was utterly mistaken, my boy. In his sober senses he never coupled such a vulgar intrigue as that with the name of such a man as Mr. Cecil, much as he might hate him. There were never two fools more in love with one another since the world began. Will you let me burn your wound out, my boy? It will hurt, but the wound will heal. I know from fifty fellows that these two fell in love with one another at first sight. That marriage happens to be a splendid family arrangement, but it is only a parcel of cackling idiots who say that it was made up from family motives only. Let us be just."

"But why—now I know the truth, I still ask why was I to be considered so far below her?" And

poor Austin repeated a coarse expression of the old man's, alluded to before.

"Who said that about you?"

"Old Hilton."

"God forgive him, Austin; he was a fool. Austin, that man lost every friend in the world but your father through short-sighted cunning. Even Lord Liverpool never forgave him some dreadful business about the French funds in 1806. You must not think of the words of a soured, ill-tempered man like that. Mr. Cecil is as incapable of saying or thinking such a thing as my own mother. And as for Mary Cecil, she would have married a Welsh curate if she had chosen. But now, old fellow, to be perfectly just, we must remember this, that in the world the marriage of Lord Mewstone and Miss Cecil was as well-known a fact, as that Graham opens the letters. Old Cecil never contemplated the possibility of your being ignorant of it. You are not in the world or of the world yet. Neither am I, but I sit and listen even now. I hear all these things: you do not as yet."

So did Lord Charles Barty comfort his friend. His friend had more brains than he, but knew less on some points. When people begin to swim on the edge of that pool which is called society, they

should take care not to get out of their depths as did Austin.

"How glorious it is," said he, "to have your dear old voice in my ears again, to give me comfort. I am a different man again. Tell me, old Mentor, who is Captain Hertford?"

"Have you met him there?"

Austin told him how.

"He is Mewstone's henchman. I believe Mewstone has been fast, very fast. Captain Hertford is cruel, brutal, false, glutinous, and treacherous."

"Then why has Lord Mewstone anything to do with him?"

"Because such men are useful. Let bygones be bygones. I really know nothing more than this. I heard that character of Hertford from my blind brother Edward, who is always right."

"But does 'the world' know this of Captain Hertford?"

"I don't know. I don't know the world yet; but I know that much about Captain Hertford."

"The world seems to be fond of easy-going, Charles."

"Let you and I go into it hand-in-hand together, my boy, and see what it is like. And, Austin, I

begin to see that there is another great world down below us, of which you and I know nothing—the world of commerce and labour."

" You are beginning to find that out, are you? " said Austin.

" I think I am. It is there ; and it is beginning to mutter and growl under our feet even now. Did you ever read Humboldt's Travels? "

" No."

" Nor I ; but I have looked into them. He says, in the Andes, that the earthquakes are preceded by the most terrible underground thunder ; it begins muttering and growling, and then it swells up into a horrible roar. After this the earth gapes, and those fools who have not moved their property and their persons are swallowed up. Have you heard this underground thunder yet ? "

" Yes, but very few else," said Austin.

" You are mistaken. Many have heard it, and are preparing to move their goods. All we want is a leader, to show us what move to make."

" Is there such a one ? " said Austin.

" There is."

" And the gentleman's name ? " said Austin.

" Robert Peel."

"And you have found *that* out, too," said Austin. "By Jove, Charles, I believe we have only one heart between the pair of us."

"Hurrah!" cried Lord Charles Barty, breaking into a mad gallop across a common, and waving his white hat over his head. "Come on, friend of my soul, and let us follow him through it all—through misrepresentation, through obloquy, down to political death itself, which will only end in a more glorious political resurrection. An adventure, Sir Knight, an adventure. A Peel! a Peel! to the rescue! Who is the laggard that won't win his spurs in such a cause? Peel to the rescue. Hurrah!"

Now it so befel that there were a great many geese on this common, over which Lord Charles Barty rode so madly, crying out the name of a certain right honourable baronet; and he had the misfortune to ride over one of these geese, and on his return had to pay five shillings to a vociferous old woman who saw him do it. But of all the geese on that common, were there, do you think, two greater geese than Austin Elliot and Lord Charles Barty? But that is exactly the sort of stuff that some young fellows talked in '44. We are all much wiser now, are we not?

CHAPTER X.

THEIR gallop brought them across the common and to the house where Eleanor was staying with Aunt Maria. Here Austin's friend left him, and went to an inn, and put up his horse to wait for him ; and Austin rang at the bell.

The house was a great red-brick house, with narrow windows, standing a long way back, with a wall and two carriage-gates beside the road. There were also two cedars, a big bell in a little pent-house just inside the gate, and a big dog, who barked when you rang it. That house will be taken by a doctor, and made a private madhouse of some day, as the march of intellect goes on, and London expands. If it were ten miles nearer town, it would be snapped up at once for that purpose. If you ask, "Why for a madhouse, not for a school?" the

answer is, that the grounds are too large for a schoolmaster, and until they began to build it in, and take the land off his hands, it wouldn't pay him. The house before which Austin stood will become either a madhouse or an institution of some sort or another.

A great deal might be said about these old suburban houses. The author would like nothing better than to dwell on their peculiarities, but this is not the place for doing so. He begs the reader's patience for only a very few words about them. They were built, most of them, in the beginning of last century, and have been degraded and degraded from one purpose to another, each one lower than the last, until they are pulled down because they interfere with a new terrace or square. The general fate which awaits all of them is degradation and death, but sometimes they are preserved even in the midst of the great flood of bricks, and then they fetch high rents.

Did any reasonable man ever go to walk through the western part of Chelsea on to Walham Green and Fulham, if he could manage to walk anywhere else? Most likely not. And yet there are some houses standing about there which will make a man

think of if he choose to think. Take one of those suburban houses, built about 1700, and think about it, and people it over again with three generations. Take a long, low, back-lying house in the King's Road, Chelsea, in front of which they have built shops. That was once a quiet gentleman's house, with elm-trees round it, where several generations of children tumbled downstairs, and fell out of window, and lost their tops and balls in the water-butt, and laughed and cried and quarrelled and made it up, until they grew to handsome young men and women. How many pairs of happy lovers went a-courtting in that summer-house at the end of the garden ; before Mr. Mullins took it and made a madhouse of it, and the woman who thought she was queen, took possession of the summer-house, and hunted us boys out of it when we dared go in ; and before they put Miss H——, a strong, red-faced woman, with a big throat and thick lips, into the old nursery, where she screamed and yelled and tore night and day for above a year, till it pleased God to put an end to her misery.

And when the madhouse was removed to Putney, Waterer took the house and grounds, and exhibited his rhododendrons and azaleas there. And all society

came down to look at them, and the line of carriages extended far up and down the King's Road. Then the dreary old garden, in which the mad-woman used to walk so wearily up and down, was filled with a blaze of flowering American plants. And on the very same ground where the author, a frightened boy, looking over the palings, has seen poor Miss H——, in her straight-waistcoat, cast herself screaming down among the cabbage-plants, and bite the earth with her teeth; on that very same ground all the dandies and beauties of London were walking and talking. The last I know of that piece of ground is, that the man who lets flys had laid it down in oats. *Sic transit, &c.* That is the history of one suburban house, carefully told, and there are very many with far stranger histories than that.

The study of these old red-brick suburban houses has given the author so much pleasure in his time that he has tried to give the reader some interest in them, and make him partake of the same pleasure. This is the only time he means to offend in this way in this story, and so he casts himself on his reader's mercy.

Austin, who had dismounted, rang the bell again, and again the big dog barked; this time, also, a door

was opened, and Austin heard a man, apparently a footman, say, "Four ounces is four, and two quarters is a tizzy, and a bob lost tossing makes two half-bulls and a bender, don't it, you aggravating minx?" And then, instead of coming to Austin's assistance, Austin heard him shut the door again.

So he had to ring once more. This time he heard the door opened again, and footsteps approaching. Immediately the wicket in the carriage-gate was thrown back, and in the aperture stood a little lean old footman, with a cross face and very grey hair, who cried out, "Now then, young fellow!" *

"Now then, young fellow," said Austin, "how about the two half-bulls and the bender?"

The old man laughed:—"It's them gals, Mr. Austin, got a shilling of mine among un somewhere, and wants to bounee me out of it. Told me you was the baker's boy too. Come in afore she sees you, else she'll not be at home. She is gallivanting in the paddock with Captain Hertford."

"The deuce!" thought Austin; "who is Captain Hertford?" he said.

"The gentleman as you met in Wales the week afore last, when you fell in love with Miss Cecil; and as you travelled with and told all about it;

and as come and told *we* all about it. That's about who Captain Hertford is, Master Austin."

"But what is he doing here?" asked Austin, only half aloud.

"Making love to the old woman," said the old man, speaking very loud and plain.

"Confound you, James, don't be a ridiculous fellow," said Austin, laughing. "Making love to Aunt Maria?"

"That's about the size on it," said James. "Now come quick into the stable-yard afore she sees you. You wouldn't see much of Miss Eleanor if she caught sight on you."

"How is Aunt Maria?" said Austin, in the stable-yard, after a groom had gone off with his horse.

"Owdacious," said James. "Drat her, she always were owdacious, worn't she?" he continued, scratching his head. When he saw Austin frown and shake his head: "I mean she always were a owdacious fine woman of her age."

"Where did you say she was?" said Austin.

"Where is she?" said James, getting desperate and rebellious. "Why, she's upstairs, and she's downstairs, and she's in my lady's chamber; all three at once sometimes. She always were a deuce of a

woman to come round a corner on you sharp ; but since the will was read, she shall come round a corner again any woman in England for a new hat, or a tripe supper for eight. The gals is losing flesh over her. They was giggling upstairs the day before yesterday, and I see her come slipping out of the drawing-room like a old pussy-cat, and so I hits myself down the back-stairs with a tray-full of glasses, and brings her *that* way, and now the ungrateful minxes wants to do me out of a shilling."

" I hope you caught it, sir ? " said Austin.

" Catch it ? There, let's talk about something else, Master Austin. However, I can always stop her when I have had enough. Come on."

" I hope you didn't answer her."

" I only told her not to regard my feelings, for that I was used to the ways of old people, and that when people came to her time of life, they naturally got brittle in the temper, the same as they lost their teeth."

" How could you say such a thing, James ? You know if you go on like that she will be obliged to ask Miss Eleanor to discharge you. And I warn you that, deeply attached as I and she are to you, I could not say a word in your favour."

" She'll never ask Miss Eleanor to do that. I

know too much." And so saying, he opened the drawing-room door, and announced

"Master Austin."

Eleanor rose up and came towards him ; she held out her hands towards him, but that was not enough ; she took both his hands in hers, but that was not enough either ; so the poor innocent, silly little body burst out a-crying so piteously that Austin took her in his arms and kissed her.

"I am so miserable, dear brother," she said.
"How kind of you to come to me."

"And I, dear sister, am so unhappy too," said Austin, who, ten minutes before, had been galloping and shouting with Lord Charles Barty across the common. He did not mean to be hypocritical or untrue. He did really think he was unhappy, and so he was.

"What is the matter, dear Austin?" she said. "I ask for a very selfish reason. If you will tell me your sorrows, I shall certainly forget mine. So you have been staying at the Cecils?"

"Yes."

"And what did you think of—— Ah, Austin, you wrote me no merry letters from there. You would not confide in me about that. I expected a long

letter, filled, as usual, with wild admiration for the last ineligible young lady ; but when none came, I, knowing Fanny Cecil, knew what had happened at once."

" What do you mean ? "

" Knew that you had fallen in love for the first time in your life."

" By Jove, Eleanor, you are right. How you guessed that I cannot tell."

If these two—this handsome, noble young lad, and this quiet, dark-haired girl—had at that moment been in the Palace of Truth, Eleanor would have answered :

" Because I have loved you and none other ever since I could love any one, and because I shall never love any other man as I do you to the day of my death."

But they were in an old red-brick house on a common in Surrey, and Aunt Maria was plainly to be seen in the paddock walking with Captain Hertford. They were in a palace which was not of truth, and so she only said :

" No one could doubt it who knew Fanny Cecil. I could have told you that she was to marry Lord Mewstone. I would gladly have saved you this,

brother, but I never dreamt that you were to be thrown against her in that way. When I heard you were there I dreaded that it would happen. Why did not Charles Barty warn you?"

"He did ; but his warning came too late."

"Ah ! he was at Turin. Austin," she said, very quietly, "I want to speak to you."

Austin looked up at her. Her hands were quietly folded before her, her eyes were more brilliant and prominent than usual, and she was very pale. Her mouth was tightly set, and there was not a twitch in the muscles of it. The upper lip and the chin, both too short at ordinary times, seemed shorter than ever now. Austin began to see what she would be like when she was an old woman.

Eleanor loved Austin so deeply, as never man was loved before, she thought. Better than herself by far ; for by the very slightest management she might marry him, advise him, feed his ambition, give him wealth and ambition, triumph with him in success, console him in disappointment, get him taught the ways of the world, bring him into society by her wealth—nay, more than all, teach him to worship at the same altar with her, to love the same God, to trust to the same hope of salvation—she would do

none of these things ; she was going to give him his dismissal for ever—with a slight reservation.

And why ? Because Austin could never love her. Because if he did not love her he would merely marry her for her money. And then the consciousness that he was untrue to himself would prey on him, and render him miserable, lower his moral tone, and make him feel that his whole career was a false one.

That is the way she reasoned—that was the way she accounted for her conduct. She was one of the best and noblest little women that ever lived (as the reader will confess when he has read the book to the end) ; she reasoned in this way—it was satisfactory reasoning enough ; but, nevertheless, her own soul said something else, and would make itself heard, it said :—“ He shall love me, and woo me, before he win me ! ” But she said—

“ Austin, do you remember my father’s deathbed ? ”

He said, “ Yes ! ” He could hardly believe that she could anticipate the very matter on which he was ready to speak. But she did so.

“ I can speak to you quite openly, now your heart is so deeply engaged. You must forget everything that passed, everything he said, every hint he gave, or we must part here, once and for all.”

"I know it," said Austin. "Things might have been which can never be now. My heart is gone; I came to tell you so. I came to tell you that I would be your brother, your servant; would go through the world at your side; that your husband should be the friend of my heart; but that your wealth alone would render it impossible for me to be more. Therefore, having said this to one another, we can now go through the world hand in hand, on just the same terms as we have hitherto done."

"We will, Austin. I will be aunt Eleanor to your children, and sister Eleanor to you; but don't leave me all alone. You are the only friend I have. I dare talk to you now, brother, you see."

So they talked confidentially, till there was an alarm of Aunt Maria, and then Austin went away; this highly platonic arrangement being brought to a satisfactory termination.

A very satisfactory one, indeed. Eleanor, two minutes afterwards, had locked herself into her bedroom, and thrown herself on her bed, in a wild passion of tears, wishing that she never had been born; wishing that Austin had never seen Miss Cecil; wishing that she might die in her grief; doing everything, in short, but blaming Austin. And there

she lay, till the tempest of her grief began to get less strong, and its gusts less frequent and violent, and at last raised her weary-worn little face up, and prepared to go downstairs, and be furiously scolded by her cruel old aunt. Yes, this half of the arrangement was very satisfactory ; now for the other.

When Austin got back to Lord Charles Barty, he looked as black as thunder. He quarrelled with his horse, he quarrelled with his dog, and was very much inclined to quarrel with Lord Charles ; but that was not an easy matter at any time, or by any person. So he contented himself with sulking all the way home, and giving short answers. Lord Charles was surprised at this. He had never seen Austin cross so long before. He did what every good fellow ought to do, when his friend is angry : he appeared concerned and anxious, but spoke of indifferent matters, leaving Austin to open his grief to him.

When they came to Mortlake, Austin said, “Let us ride on to London, Charles.”

“Yes, suppose we do. I should like it. Will you take Robin ?”

“Yes, I think so. You can trust him anywhere.”

“Yes, he is a wise fellow, that Robin,” said Lord Charles. “‘Way forrid, Min !’ that’s what the

Scotch shepherds say to their dog. See, he is gone away like a thunderbolt after imaginary sheep. He is a fine fellow."

" I say, Charles."

" Ay, ay!"

" I have made such a cursed fool of myself."

So the second half of the grand platonic arrangement seemed far from satisfactory also.

CHAPTER XI.

LATE as it was, Austin and his friend posted off to join their reading party at Bangor, and with them went the dog Robin, of course.

There were nine of them in that reading party, and they spent that summer—one of those happy golden periods which surely comes at least once in a man's life, unless he be an exceptionally unfortunate one. Very unlucky must the man be who has no golden age to look back at fondly in after years. Dull must be the life of a child who cannot say, “Once, in spring-time, I went into a meadow, and gathered cowslips.”

Lucky, again—fortunate beyond most men—must these nine have been, if any other period ever came, in any of their lives, sufficiently happy to make them forget this summer of theirs at Bangor, in 1844; a

time of youth, health, hope, ambition, and friendship. Snowdon was behind them, the sea before, Anglesey sleeping in the sunshine, the Ormshead floating like a blue mist in the horizon, and Penmaenmawr towering black and awful above the little white farm in the wood at Aber. Golden sands, blue sea, and slow-sailing summer-clouds aloft.

Were they idle? Oh, dear, yes. Seven of them, God bless them, were horribly idle. The good Professor scolded, predicted that they would all be either "gulfed" or "ploughed;" said he sincerely hoped that they would be; said that the foundations of justice would be sapped at the root if they weren't: but it was no use; they all loved him too well to mind him. They were very good for a few days after one of these terrible jobations; but then two of them would be missing at their hour, the Professor would go to their lodgings, and find from their landlady, that some idle villain of a university man, who was not going to be in the October term, had arrived promiscuously, in the town, and had induced them to go off to Llyn Ogwen, or some of those places, the names of which the good Professor will hate to his dying day.

Hayton and Dayton went and lodged at Garth,

because it was out of the way, inconvenient, and dirty, and a mile from the scene of tuition. Hayton, who was fat, fished for four months from the end of the pier, and caught nothing, but smoked 8 lb. 9 oz. of tobacco. He also, during this time, made love to Maria Williams, the pilot's daughter, and proposed to her on Michaelmas-day, after the goose dinner, on which occasion she refused him in favour of Owen Owens, a young ship-carpenter. Dayton, meanwhile, bought the yacht *Arhydanos*, of 1 cwt. register ; length between perpendiculars, 6 feet 4 inches ; extreme breadth, 18 inches ; depth of hold, 2 feet 6 inches ; and essayed to drown himself therein ; and did not succeed merely because, whenever he put forth into the deep, three or four small fishing-boats used to follow him, and when he was capsized—which happened every time but one when he went out—used to pick him up, and fight for him, at the rate of half a crown a-head per man, and a shilling for boys ; being at the rate of thirty shillings a voyage.

Horton and Morton did not live in Bangor, but stayed at Aber, five miles off, because it was out of the way and more expensive ; and they got so attached to the good people there, and the good people there so attached to them, that they refused to move into the

town, though the Professor fulminated about it. They were the most tiresome fellows of all; for, not content with idling about, shooting seagulls and stints themselves, they would think nothing of getting half the party to dine with them, and, after dinner, of seducing the whole lot of them up the glen by the waterfall, and over the summit of Carnedd Llewellyn to Capel Curig, a trifling distance of fifteen miles or so, and sending them home to Bangor, after a couple of days, by Nant Frangon.

The other seven lived in Bangor, and were not so intolerably idle as these two. Only two of the whole party read really steadily and well, and those two were Austin Elliot and Lord Charles Barty.

Was Austin happy? I am afraid so; although he would have been very angry if any one had accused him of it. He was by way of being miserable. He thought he was, but he was quite mistaken. In the first place, he was getting over the disappointment about Miss Cecil; and in the next, there is pretty nearly as much pleasure as pain in an affair of that sort. For is that strange wild yearning jealousy, pain? Catch me a man, a penniless, friendless man, with all his hopes broken, and all his friends gone, and ask *him*. Ask him what he would give

to feel his bitterest disappointment of this kind over again.

No, he was not unhappy. A nine days' affair of the kind does not, in this barbarous island, hit so very hard. The more refined French smother themselves with charcoal ; or, as two of them did a few years ago, take a warm bath, put on a clean shirt, and blow their brains out simultaneously, leaving behind them what we barbarians would call a horribly blasphemous paper. But Austin's class was nearly safe, and so he read hard, and made it so.

This visit of his to Tyn-y-Rhaiadr was a very important one ; for he not only fell in love with Miss Cecil, in itself an important affair, but he also made the acquaintance of Captain Hertford ; and, moreover, had the dog Robin given to him as a present.

They had been at Bangor about a month, when one day Austin went out to Aber, in the afternoon, with Horton and Morton, for he was rather fagged with work, and left Lord Charles at home at Bangor over his Pindar. They went a-fishing for the smallest sample of trout I know of on the face of the whole globe, that evening, and caught a few of them ; and in the evening stood under the highest waterfall in Wales, and saw the lace-like threads of water

streaming over the black rocks from a height of one hundred and eighty feet, and after that turned merrily homewards.

Between the waterfall and the sea at Aber is one of the most extraordinary shoreless chasms I have ever seen. The stream runs through it, but, as we used to believe, no man has ever been through it since Creation. It is half a mile long, a succession of shoreless lyns and slippery rocks. And Austin, coming to the upper end of it, proposed to swim through. He never did, though some one else has actually done so since ; for as he was beginning to undress himself, with that eagerness and haste with which young British and Irish men of three-and-twenty hail the opportunity of drowning themselves, or breaking their necks, Robin bounded joyously forward, and some one appeared coming rapidly towards them. They saw, in a few minutes, that it was Lord Charles Barty.

"Austin," he said, breathlessly, "the Lords have reversed the sentence of the lower courts, and acquitted O'Connell. The only one of the four who went for him was Brougham."

"I told you so," said Austin. "What a noble way of smothering him. And old Brougham against

him, eh? Lord! what a world it is;—old Brougham, eh? Conceive the slyness of the man, will you?"

"Don't you impute low motives," said Lord Charles; "it is the habit of a young and unformed mind."

"Go to Bath," said Austin. "I say, I am going to swim through this chasm."

"No, don't be an ass," said the other. "Come and walk with me; I have something to tell you."

"So you didn't come all this way to tell me about Dan, then?" said Austin.

"No," said he. "I got tired of my work, and I thought of you and the other fellows having a jolly evening here, and I came out in a car. Besides, I have seen some one since you left."

"Who?"

"Why, Lord and Lady Mewstone. They have come from Chester, and are going on to Tyn-y-Rhaiadr to-morrow morning. He has called at your lodgings, and he is going to call again; and—and I thought I would come out and tell you, old fellow; that is all."

"By Jove, you are a good fellow," said Austin; "what the deuce should I do without you? What had I better do?"

"Let us stay here. You don't know what Hertford

may have said, or what *she* has heard. As for *him*, his nose is far too high in the air for him to suppose that you had ever thought of her otherwise than as a goddess. Hertford would never have dared to let him hear anything. If he had, he would not be so affectionate."

"But do you think that she ever guessed?"

"Lord knows! I don't understand women. Hertford knows that you were deeply taken with her. How do you or I know whether he hasn't used that knowledge to keep his position with her? How do you know, that in a gentle way, he has not let her know that he knows it, and so avoid the *congé* which he would most certainly get, the moment she came into power? She is afraid of Mewstone—everybody is afraid of him. I wouldn't go back to Bangor to-night. Stay here till they are clear off; it won't do you any good to see her again; and if she sees you, and if Hertford has been saying anything (may the deuce confound him!) she might look confused, or something.

So let's stay here at Lewis's and have a rubber."

And so they stayed and had a rubber, and poor Austin played very bad, trumped his partner's (of course, Lord Charles', for people generally pay dearly for actions of good nature in small things) knave, led

out strong suits of trumps without any suit to follow, ‘bottled’ them when his partner led them first time round, drew two trumps for one—did, in fact, everything but revoke, from which he was kept by a mere brute instinct. Instead of thinking of his cards, he was thinking of Lady Mewstone, about whom he had as much business to think as of Noah’s eldest daughter, about whose existence we have no information. But he had a patient, affectionate partner, who only laughed louder at each blunder. Lord Charles would do more for him than lose three-and-twenty shillings. Charles paid him for all his affectionate forethought one day. We shall see how.

The next morning, Lord and Lady Mewstone had disappeared in a cloud of dust towards Caernarvon. And Austin and his friend walked into Bangor, in time to take their hour with the good Professor.

The next night but one, Austin sat up very late over some work. He had hardly been in bed more than three hours, when he was awoke by being shaken, and, turning over, saw Lord Charles standing over him.

“Let me sleep,” he said. “I am so tired. I have hardly got to bed.”

“Get up, Austin,” said the other. “We have

been down to bathe. There is a screw steamer coming up the Straits. I am nearly sure it is the Pelican."

Austin was out of bed in a moment, and dressing quickly, ran down to the point. It was the dear old Pelican, lying about two hundred yards out from the point, with a little steam coming from her steam-pipe, every now and then giving a throb or two with her propeller, just enough to keep her beautiful sharp bows stationary against the green sea-water, for the tide was setting strongly down the Straits towards the bridge.

They have never improved on the model of the Pelican any more than they have on the model of the Great Britain. The lines of the Pelican, however, were more like those of the Himalaya than those of the Great Britain. If you put your two hands together before your face, expand them till they form a right angle with one another, and then bring them together until they form half a right angle, your two hands will have nearly represented the sides of the Pelican from bow to stern.

The Professor, and Horton, and Morton, were all there after their bathe, and, as Lord Charles and Austin came up, were admiring the beauty of the vessel. And, after a moment, Austin said—

"It *is* the Pelican, and there is my governor.
Let's all come on board."

There never was such a reasonable proposition. They all bundled into a boat together at once. The Professor, when they were seated, reminded Horton that his hour came before breakfast, and that therefore they must not be more than ten minutes. Horton, finding himself on the high seas, grew insolent and mutinous, and broached the extraordinary theory, that the powers and jurisdiction of a coach or tutor, did not extend beyond low watermark. The Professor fired up at this, and challenged him to produce his authority, and they were in full wrangle, and both beginning to get angry, when the boat swung to under the yacht's side, and they all had to tumble up on deck. It now appeared that the dog, Robin, had stowed himself away under a thwart, and, having discovered himself, was walking about in a dangerous way over the top of everything, proposing to do frightful things with himself, unless taken on board. When he was hoisted on deck, during which process he was as good as gold, he smelt Aunt Maria's Pomeranian, head over heels, down the engine-room ladder.

At the gangway they were met by a handsome

old gentleman—a genial, good-tempered-looking old gentleman—whose eyes brightened up when they met Austin's, and there, somehow, they were all looking another way for a moment, as gentlemen will on certain occasions. But only for one moment; in the next Austin was introducing them to his father, with an air of triumph in his handsome face, as if he was saying, “Come now, which of you has got such a governor as I?”

“Mr. Elliot,” said the Professor, “one of my pupils has mutinied in the boat, and has insulted me. He says that my authority does not extend beyond low water-mark.”

“He is perfectly right, my dear sir,” said Mr. Elliot. “I know, in the way of business, *a little* of that sort of thing, and you haven't a leg to stand on. If it were not so, your authority is merged into mine on my own deck. Ask Phillimore—ask any one. Gentlemen, I request that you will immediately come aft. Lord Charles Barty, a word with you.”

He spoke to him for a moment, and then Lord Charles ran to the engine-room ladder, and roared out—“Go ahead full speed,” and then ran to the side and called out—“Cast off the painter there.”

And cast off that painter was, and ahead at full speed that vessel went, with the Professor protesting against piracy and deforeement, threatening to take the matter into the Arches, protesting that Hayton was coming for his hour at ten, that he would be plucked, and that his widowed mother would sink into her grave broken-hearted; but the cranks were gleaming, and the screw was spinning, and her head was for Holy Island, and they were all laughing at him, and so the Professor laughed himself.

“Father,” said Austin, “you have stole Aunt Maria’s dog, and my dog has tumbled it down into the engine-room.”

Mr. Elliot had no time to explain, for, coming aft they saw that there were two ladies on board, sitting close to the wheel. The one, a large red-faced, ill-tempered looking lady, who was Aunt Maria, and a sweet, gentle, dark-looking little lady, almost like a Frenchwoman, who was Eleanor.

“By Jove,” thought Austin, for an instant, “Eleanor is really very pretty. And how well she dresses!”

Mr. Elliot presented the Professor and the pupils to Aunt Maria, and she received them graciously, though she was horribly cross (why you will guess

soon). So Austin and Eleanor had just a few words together by themselves.

"Dear Eleanor."

"Dear Austin."

"How on earth did Aunt Maria and you come to go to sea with the governor? If she offers to marry him, I'll ——"

"Don't be ridiculous, Austin dear. Suppose she was to hear you?"

"She couldn't hate me worse than she does. I was only joking. I know the governor too well. But how was it?"

"I had to have change of air, and Mr. Elliot asked us. We, neither of us, mind the sea, you know. So we came."

They had time to say thus much, and then it became necessary to introduce the Professor and Horton and Morton to Eleanor. Austin stood beside her while they were presented. There was one look in all the three faces, that of pleased admiration. He looked at her again.

"I never thought Eleanor pretty," said his most serene, illustrious, and imperial high mightiness to himself. "But these fellows seem to admire her. University men always admire every girl they come

across," continued the *blasé* man-of-the-world, who had just been confessing to his friend that he knew nothing of that world. "And, besides, she *has* a sweet little face of her own," concluded the real Austin Elliot.

So she had. At breakfast, in the pretty decorated cabin, while the green water was seething past them, and through every open port-hole, the purple Caernarvonshire mountains were seen over the summer sea, as though set in a frame : at that pleasant breakfast, in the fresh morning air, it was evident that both Horton and Morton were quite of that opinion. Whether they talked to her, to Austin, to Lord Charles Barty, or to one another, they always looked at her, and watched to see what *she* thought of what they said. They were two clever young fellows, but they seemed more brilliant than usual this morning ; they were two handsome young fellows, but they seemed handsomer than usual now ; there was a grander air about them than usual. In ordinary times, among their fellows, they could be coarse and rude with the rest ; but here, before this dark-eyed little girl, there was an air of high-bred chivalrous courtesy about them, not only towards her, but towards every one else. There was something

about Eleanor which had changed them, had put them on their mettle. There *was* something in that girl after all. Austin was getting proud of Eleanor, in the same way as a Scotchman is proud of Glenlyon, as if he had helped to make it.

And Lord Charles Barty, good soul, sat and looked on, and laughed to himself—things were going on as he wished.

Aunt Maria was by way of being a clever woman; and, indeed, she was a clever woman in one way, though possibly if one had told her the grounds on which one considered her clever, she would have been very angry. She could talk about nearly everything, and had so much of the dexterity of a woman of the world, that her knowledge, by no means small, was made to go a very long way. She was very cross at Austin's getting Eleanor at the other end of the table, among his friends; but she knew it was no use being cross. The Professor had been handed over to her bodily, and she applied herself to her task with a will, and her task was twofold—to show off her own knowledge to him, and to pick his brains for future use.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER breakfast they all went on deck. Now, Mr. Elliot was an old-fashioned man, who hated smoking, and never for one instant tolerated it on his quarter-deck. But this did not prevent Austin wanting a cigar; and, besides, he wanted to think somewhat—wanted, in fact, to think about Eleanor, and the cause of her amazing success that morning. “The little brown thing,” he thought, “how wonderfully pretty she is!”

The moment he came on the main deck, Robin loped up to him, and jumped on him; after that he dropped his tail and ears, and followed him.

The proper place to light your cigar is in the engine-room, particularly when the chief engine-man is your most particular friend and gossip. So Austin went down the engine-room ladder, while Robin

stood atop, with his head on one side, one ear up and the other down, waiting to see whether or no his master would come up that way again, or whether he had to run round and meet him somewhere else. Aunt Maria's Pomeranian came and looked down too, but, not being able to understand the situation, sat on the deck and proceeded with his toilet.

"And how's a' wi' ye, Master Austin?" said the chief engineer. "How's a' wi' ye, my bonnie young gentleman?"

"So so, George. Well enough. I say, old man, you haven't got that meerschaum of yours? Let us have a quiet pull at it, with some of the Cavendish. When I do come to sea, I don't care a hang for cigars."

Austin had some other low tastes beside dog-fancying, you see. He preferred tobacco to cigars. He had his wicked will, and when he was in the first stage of complaining, he said—

"How is she, Geordie?"

"She's vera weel. She's going her sixty-twa."

"Those boxwood bearings didn't do, did they?"

"They didna do so bad, but the hornbeam are better. Aye, none but a Scotchman would turn ye out such engines as they."

“ Why they are Penn’s, of Greenwich.”

“ Aye! aye! aye! they are Penn’s, of Greenwich, De’il doubt it. There’s his name on them. But wha made ’em? A Scotchman, sir; a Falkirk man.”

“ I don’t believe you, Geordie. I have a good mind to take you by the hair of your head and bang your head against the companion-ladder, for that dreadful story.”

“ Oh, ye’ll no do that to yer old Geordie. Hey, my bonnie bonnie boy, ye have got some Scot’s blude in ye. Never such a bonnie boy as you came out of England. Where got ye yon dog?”

Miss Cecil gave him to me.”

Geordie turned his noble Wilkie-like face round on him for one instant, and then turned it away again. He said—

“ Mistress Cecil! That’s my Leddy Mewstone.”

And Austin said “ Yes.” That was all they said; but Austin knew that, somehow, his old friend George had heard something about him and Miss Cecil, so he held his peace.

“ Yon’s a bonnie dog,” continued Geordie. “ There is na such dogs in the world. No, my bonnie—my gude sir, I mean to say—no man kens what bonnie dogs are yon. That dog would follow you to death.”

Austin peeped up the companion, and saw that they were all come out of the cuddy, and were on the quarter-deck (which, in this ship, was merely the roof of that house on deck which was called the cuddy). He had not finished his pipe yet, and determined to go forward; so he passed by the machinery, and came up by the fore-companion, and found himself among the crew.

The watch were congregated round something—something with a sharp old voice belonging to it, which Austin thought was tolerably familiar to him, more particularly after he had heard it say—

“ Believe that yarn? In course I believe it. As a general rule, mind you, sailors is the very drattedest liars as walks. But this here ship’s company, mind you, forms the remarkablest and astoundingest exception to that there rule, ever I hearn on. I should no more think of doubting anythink as any member of this ship’s company took in his head to try and make me swaller on, than I should think of sitting on this here harness-cask, and a watching of cook’s boy peeling of the taters with his nasty dirty little hands.”

As the old man to whom the voice belonged was doing exactly what he described, his profession of

faith in the veracity of the ship's company, was hailed with a roar of laughter by every one except the man who had "pitched the last yarn." Immediately after, they saw that Austin was among them, and drew off, smiling and touching their locks to him. He was a great favourite here, as elsewhere.

"Well, James!" said he to Miss Hilton's old footman, for it was he.

"Well, Master Austin!" said the old man, nursing one of his legs on the top of the harness-cask, "And so you're come to sea, eh? and brought a hull biling on 'em with you. And a elderly cove, to walk up and down the quarter-deck along of Aunt Maria, while the young uns makes love to Miss Eleanor."

"Don't be an old fool, James," said Austin, laughing.

"You might as well say to a sailor," said the old man, raising his voice so that the ship's company might hear him, "you might as well say to a sailor, don't be a liar! I might as well say to you, Master Austin, don't you be a *young* fool. Ah, well! we can't help it, none on us! We're all as God made us; we was all born so, and as such we must remain."

"Were you born an old fool, then, you most disagreeable old porcupine?" said Austin.

"No, I warnt," said old James, tartly; "I was born a young 'un. My character has deweloped; yours will dewelope in the same way as mine if you live long enough; which Lord forbid!"

"Come, old fellow! you don't mean that?"

"Yes I do, when I see some things. I don't want none that I loves to live too long, and see what I see. And I loves you, and you knows it."

"What's the matter now, old fellow?"

"Drat the whole country of North Wales, say I!" was the reply, "with its mountains, and its waterfalls, and its new lighthouse on the Lleyn, and its comings on board at Aberystwith, and its going ashore again at Caernarvon, accause you were at Bangor, and leaving she to stump up and down the quarter-deck, along of a tutor, in her aggravating old lilac jean boots! Drat it all! if it warn't for Miss Eleanor I'd go into an alms-house!"

At the mention of the quarter-deck and jean boots, Austin looked there. Aunt Maria was walking up and down with the Professor. She *had* got on lilac jean boots; and, what is more, those jean boots were the most important thing which took your eye. For being eight or nine feet over Austin's head, and her feet therefore more than a yard above his eyes, her

whole figure was (to him) unnaturally foreshortened, as in early photographs.

Austin looked at Aunt Maria for one instant, and saw that James was alluding to her; he turned round to mildly rebuke the old man, but the old man had been too clever for him. He had gone into the galley, and sat himself down alongside of the great fat jolly cook, in front of the coppers, with his heels under him like a tailor, watching the pots and pans on the stove. The cook caught Austin's eye, and gave a fat wink towards Austin, and a nod at the old man, as if he would say, "here he is." And lest you may think this a liberty on the part of the cook, I must tell you that Austin had been cook's very good friend, ever since he was six years old.

The engineer had let him know that Captain Hertford had been on board; and so when old James had talked in his grotesque and rambling way about some one having gone ashore at Caernarvon, Austin knew what he was alluding to. Captain Hertford! What could have made his father take him on board? And, moreover, now he came to think, why had his father brought Aunt Maria to sea with him? He wished he could get his father alone. At this moment, the Master came forward.

"Where is the governor, Mr. Jackson?" said Austin, suddenly; "he is not on the quarter-deck."

"Alone in his cabin, Master Austin," said the Master; "now's your time or never."

"Thanks!" said Austin, and bolted aft at once. He ran through the saloon, and opened the door of his father's cabin; his father was there, seated before a tableful of papers.

"My own boy!" said Mr. Elliot; "I thought you were never coming to me——"

And we will go on to that part of the conversation which relates to the story which I have got to tell.

"Father," said Austin, "how come you to have Aunt Maria on board?"

"Dear little Eleanor was ordered a sea-voyage," said Mr. Elliot, drumming on the table with his fingers, "and so I offered her one, and she accepted it gratefully. Aunt Maria is her natural guardian, though she *is* of age."

"Who? Aunt Maria?"

"Don't be a puppy to me, on board my own yacht. You know who I mean."

"His own yacht! O Lord!" replied Austin. "Think of the pride and conceit of the man for an instant, will you have the goodness? O Lord!"

“Don’t you be a puppy, sir, or I shall be very angry with you. Some one might hear you.”

“Did it cut itself, shaving, in two places this morning, in consequence of the rolling of its own yacht; and did it pull two tufts of nap off its best hat and stick them on its countenance; and didn’t everybody see what had happened the moment it appeared on the quarter-deck, and didn’t they all grin and giggle most confoundedly!”

“*Pax! Austin, pax!*” said Mr. Elliot, trying to look grave. “Come, don’t waste time here in gibing at me, you have plenty of time for that ashore.”

“Oh no, I haven’t. If you were a civil person, you would come and live near me. There is not a soul in Bangor that I can chaff, as I dare to chaff you.”

“Now you are going to be a monkey again.”

“No I am not, only a puppy. Man, do you know how I will pay you out, for calling me those two names?”

“Austin, my boy, be serious. Aunt Maria will be blundering down here presently, and spoiling our *tête-à-tête*, and you will find her deuced difficult to dislodge.”

“Aren’t you going to marry Aunt Maria, then?” said Austin.

"I have not quite made up my mind about that," said Mr. Elliot. "I have very nearly done so, but I think there is something due to her feelings."

Austin was sufficiently sobered now. He sat down on a form, and watched his father eagerly, with a pale face.

"She has fifteen thousand pounds," continued Mr. Elliot. "A man at my time of life don't marry for love, Austin. Besides, *you* want some one to advise, strengthen, and lead you; and who is there like Miss Hilton? Yes, Austin, for your sake—for your sake only, my dear Austin, I have determined to ——"

Austin leapt up with something like an oath.

"Your gratitude is very natural, my dear boy," said Mr. Elliot; "mind, it is for your sake alone that I marry. Say not another word. If my own inclinations were consulted, I should object to marry the most ill-tempered, unprincipled woman I ever met. But you are my first object, of course."

"Father, dear father, you are not in earnest?"

"No, but I told you to be, a quarter of an hour ago, and you wouldn't be. So I have taken this means to make you so, you butterfly. You see there are two sides to a joke."

"Yours was a cruel one," said Austin.

"Not so cruel as your coupling my name with that old woman's, my boy; don't do it again. Now listen to me soberly and seriously, will you?"

Austin did not reply. He was standing behind his father's chair, with his arm round his neck, and their faces so close together that they touched each time the vessel rolled.

Mr. Elliot went on. "Attend closely to what I say, Austin, my dear; and if anything happens to me, remember every word of it. Coming up the coast, I put in at Aberystwith."

"So I heard, dad," said Austin; "*I* am on your track."

"And there Captain Hertford came on board. You know Captain Hertford?"

"Yes; go on."

"I know him pretty well. He almost *asked* me for a passage, but I did not encourage him. But Aunt Maria, as we will call her, came to me and asked for him in set terms, and then, of course, I treated him with the greatest *empressement*, and had him on board."

"Good, father; speak low."

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Elliot, with his lips almost against Austin's ear, "there is a secret be-

tween Aunt Maria and that man, and I'll be hanged if I know what it is."

"Charles Barty, father," said Austin, "gives a very bad character of Captain Hertford. Mayn't he know something about Aunt Maria?"

"Go on," said Mr. Elliot. "Let us hear your say out."

"You know that Aunt Maria, when five-and-twenty, followed a certain captain to India, and came home again still Miss Hilton, without improving her condition in any way, except getting herself cured of sea-sickness, to which fact we are indebted for her presence here to-day. You know that."

"I know it, go on."

"Do you think that he knows anything to Aunt Maria's disadvantage, eh!—anything of that sort?"

"Perhaps; not a bad guess for a very young man. Do you know who Captain Hertford is?"

"I know something about him."

"I know very little. I know that he is unprincipled—that he is the man who helped poor Robert to his ruin."

"Robert Hilton!"

"Aye! Robert Hilton; and that he has some secret with Aunt Maria, and that she is helping him

to marry Eleanor Hilton, and her nine thousand a year; that is all."

Austin brought his fist down on the table with a crash, and said something.

"Don't swear, sir—don't swear," said Mr. Elliot; "it is not good *ton* to swear before your father, sir. The only time when a young man ought to swear, sir, is when he wakes up one fine morning, and finds that he has flown his kite a devilish deal too high, and that Miss Cecil had thought as much of him as she did of the groom that lifted her on her horse. Then a man *might* swear, sir, even before his father; but not when he is leaving a sweet, amiable, beautiful—aye! beautiful, in your teeth!—young girl to be the prey of a rogue like Hertford. And—never mind! you had no right to swear in my presence, sir! *I* don't care about nine thousand a year, God knows! You will have about fifteen hundred; but you are a fool."

"But, father, I love Miss Cecil."

"No, you don't! you love Lady Mewstone, and are therefore a knave as well as a fool. D—n it! here's aunt Maria herself. Sit down, and don't begin to grin again, you monkey."

"You had no business, sir, to swear in my

presence," said Austin, as Aunt Maria opened the cuddy-door." It is not good *ton* for the father to swear before his son, sir! The only time when an old man ought to swear, sir——"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Mr. Elliot.

"Has your father been swearing, then?" said Aunt Maria.

"Dreadfully!" said Austin.

"Then I wish," said Aunt Maria, "that he would—I don't say swear, because I don't uphold that, even in a sainted man like your dear father; but I wish he would say something strong about that dog of yours."

"What has he been at, Miss Hilton?"

"At—nothing! But he is such an ugly cur."

"Well, my dear Miss Hilton, he shall be out of your way in a few hours. By the bye, dad, you must set us ashore at Conway. Hayton is waiting for his hour with the professor. The loss of two hours might pluck him.

"All right," said Mr. Elliot; "her head will be that way presently—in fact, is so now. I am going on deck."

"Well, Austin," said Aunt Maria, when they were left alone, "and how are you, sirrah, eh?"

"I am very bad," said Austin.

"Good heavens! what's the matter—meagrims, hysterics, or what?"

"I don't know."

"They say that you flew your kite at that girl of George Cecil's, who has married that prig, Lord Mewstone. I denied it when they told me. I said you were not very wise, but that you weren't such a fool as that."

Austin looked at Aunt Maria. What a coarse, violent face it was. Old Hilton's sister. Well, *he* had a coarse, violent vein in him too, and she was something like him. He looked her in the face for a second, and then said, with a smile, "Give me your arm, and come on deek. Don't be disagreeable, that's a good soul;" which course of proceeding puzzled Aunt Maria, and made her do what he told her.

And Mr. Elliot was as good as his word. He took them for a cruise on that glowing Summer's day, and there was not one of them who did not, ever after, connect the memory of the kind, good, and just old man, with one of the most delightful days in their life.

They went to Holy Island, where the preventive

men had grown pale and flabby, from eating rabbits, and the atmosphere was laden with the scent of onions, and where the oldest of them looked, with his long grey hair in the wind, not at all unlike an old rabbit, with a lot of onion sauce emptied over his head: and where Mr. Elliot frightened the population out of their wits, by telling Lieutenant Hodder, of the Coast Guard, that if Sir R. B. didn't repair a certain wall, he should be forced to "look him up," which, being understood by a Welch bystander, as "lock him up," and as such being translated into Welch, caused a report that evening in the taverns at Beaumaris, that the Queen had sent down an English lord in a frigate, to seize the persons, not only of Sir R. B., but of the Hon. Col. D. P., and Mr. A. S., and commit them all to the Tower, till they had purged themselves of their contempt, which circumstance illustrates the advantage of a portion of her Majesty's subjects talking Welch, while the rest talk English.

And re-embarking they went eastward, and at lunch time were steaming merrily under the limestone slabs of the Orm's Head, watching the brimming sea leap on to the black ledges in fountains, and pour from them in cascades, and Pen-maen-mawr hanging

1,500 feet aloft behind, a wrinkled mass of purple stone. Then Conway castle, and affectionate farewells in the pleasant Summer evening, Eleanor, and Mr. Hilton, standing on the quarter deck, arm-in-arm, and waving their hands at them, to the very last. A glorious day finished by a pleasant drive home, under the over-hanging crags, with Robin leading the way, a hundred yards ahead, barking joyfully, as if he so approved of the whole proceedings that he could not hold his tongue.

"By Jove," said Horton, as they drove under Pen-maen-mawr, "what a glorious creature it is!"

"Ah!" said Lord Charles, "is she not."

Austin looked suddenly and stealthily at him, and Lord Charles took the opportunity, suddenly and stealthily also, of making a face at Austin.

"Is she French, Elliot?" said Horton.

"French!" oh dear, no," replied Austin. "She was built by White, of Cowes."

"Who was?" said Horton, in amazement.

"The Yacht. The Pelican," said Austin.

"I was talking about Miss Hilton," said Horton.

"Ah! I wasn't," said Austin.

"But is she French, you stupid?" said Horton.

"No, she ain't," said Austin.

"She looks like it," said Horton.

"Does she?" said Austin.

"The island of Anglesea, at which we are looking," said the Professor, suddenly, "is the Mona of the Agricola of Tacitus. The Mona Cesaris is evidently the Isle of Man. In the latter case, a corruption of the Latin has been retained; in the former ——"

"Well, you needn't be sulky, Elliot," said Horton, rudely stopping the Professor's good-natured attempt at changing the subject, by saying the first thing he could think of.

"I ain't sulky, old fellow," said Austin, eagerly. "by Jove, no. I'll tell you all about it. Her mother was a French woman. It was a deuced good guess of yours. She is a noble little body, is she not? I am so proud at all of you admiring her so, you can't think. She is, as it were, my sister you know."

The Professor, who was sitting next to Austin, quietly patted him on the back. They were all merry again directly. No one ever could withstand Austin's good humour, and it was quite useless to try. Even for Aunt Maria.

That day, Hayton had come for his hour's logic, and had met the Professor's mother in the hall. The kind old lady was in profound despair. Hayton

was the only “shady” man of the lot; the only “pass” man of the whole. The Professor never took mere pass men. He had made an exception with regard to Hayton, because he was one of the most popular men in the University. Every day was of importance. It would be so dreadful, thought old Mrs. Professor, to have one of their men plucked, and poor Hayton, too! of all others, the general favourite. She was nearly in tears when she met him in the hall. She told him that the Professor had been carried to sea, and was at that present speaking hull down. What was it? Was it Tacitus? She would gladly lend him Bohn’s translation for an hour. If it was Latin prose, she thought—she said it so kindly and hesitatingly, “she believed—nay, she felt sure, that she could detect—any—any grammatical error, if he wouldn’t be offended. But what use was it,” she said. “The Professor might be away for months. The Duke of Cheshire’s yacht had come, and carried off Lord Charles Barty, and the rest of them. And who could tell when they would be back. This came of having noblemen in the party. She had always been against it.”

“It’s very kind of you,” said honest Hayton, “but it’s the logic. I am afraid you cannot help me.”

At this moment, Dayton came flying round the corner. "I say, old fellow," he cried out, "Shall I give you an hour's coach?"

Old Mrs. Professor shed tears of joy; and the two patient young men sat up in the window, with their heads together, working at the logic, while the others took their holiday on the shining summer sea.

CHAPTER XIII.

AUSTIN's political education was going on famously. The ultra-Tory opinions, carefully instilled into him, ever since he could talk, by his father, were bearing fruit. Austin, at the age of one-and-twenty, was a very advanced Radical.

I suppose that the very best and cleverest men have a hobby of some sort, which the rules of society prevent their mounting out of the bosom of their families. I suppose that every man could bore you to death on some one subject, if you would only let him. Mr. Elliot had a hobby, and had ridden it continuously before Austin was old enough to rebel. He had bored him with his hobby, and that hobby was political talk.

By the time Austin was ten, he determined that, by hook or by crook, he would be bored no longer.

Being too young to know that there were two sides to the question, he first began his rebellion by going to sleep, upsetting things, playing with the dog, and so on, while his father was talking. These efforts were utterly futile. Mr. Elliot not only wanted to instil Tory principles into his son, but he also wanted to hear himself talk. If he could not do the one thing, he was most fully determined to do the other.

However Mr. Elliot started in one of these political diatribes, he always arrived at the same result—that of praising Mr. Pitt and the Duke to the skies. Whenever Austin heard one of those two names mentioned, he used to get desperate. He began to hate them. And, on the other hand, hearing Fox and Sir Robert Peel so steadily and systematically abused, he began, out of mere obstinacy, to long to hear what they would have had to say for themselves. If he could only get hold of facts about these two men, he thought he could at all events have a wrangle with his father, which would be better fun than sitting mumchance, and hearing about that intolerable person, Pitt.

But there was no hope left for him whatever. His father had determined that he should be a Tory, and

took care to form his opinions from his own facts. He, good man, so thoroughly succeeded in boring the boy, that, at twelve, Austin was mad to get hold of some facts on the other side, and fight his father. He did not care about the truth—how should a boy of twelve years old care much about political questions? He hated the name of polities, but he hated Toryism worse. He had, by his father's management, imbibed liberal opinions, before he had heard a single argument in favour of them.

The first weapon he got into his hands was this. Mr. Elliot, most temperate of men, let out one day, that Mr. Pitt used to drink a great deal of wine. Austin seized on this, and used it with amazing dexterity. It is surprising what a desperate man will do with a very inferior weapon. A Roman would show good fight with his stylus; on occasion: I myself, have seen Mr. Dennis Moriarty junior, do the most magnificent battle with an old fire-shovel, till overborne by numbers. Yesterday only, I was shown a wooden dagger which had just been brought from Naples, a specimen of those which are made in prison by the Bourbonists, for purposes of assassination, after their knives are taken from them; and a very ugly weapon it was. Austin used his lath dagger—Mr. Pitt's

excess in wine—with the greater success, because his father had always impressed on him, that the great vice of Fox and his companions, was drunkenness.

But, after Austin's first half at Eton, he came home with a large quiver-full of barbed arrows, which he discharged at his father with enormous effect. He had got into bad company there.

The very first day he had been turned into the playground there, he, feeling lonely and somewhat scared, found himself beside another new boy, from the same house, in the same situation. They made friends that day, and their friendship only ended with death.

This was Lord Charles Barty: a noble boy of twelve, with some brains, and more ambition. He came of a great Whig house. Whiggery, as Mr. Elliot would have called it, had been his “life element” from his birth. When Austin, after a few days, told him his leading grievance, that young gentleman, aged only twelve, was enabled, by the help of his eldest brother, Lord Wargrave, to supply Austin with a few smooth pebbles from the brook, to sling at the Tory giant, and promised to bring some more soon.

When Austin began casting these pebbles at his father, in the holidays, Mr. Elliot was both amused and pleased; at all events his boy was turning his attention that way. He would sooner see him a Radical than see him without opinions.

Half after half, the merry battle went on between father and son. The old Tory sub-secretaries, and such men, who formed Mr. Elliot's little society, grew greyer under the audacious speculations which Austin brought from Eton each half. "These opinions," said they, "were answered when we were boys."—"But never refuted," quoth Austin. At which his father would rub his knees and laugh, and the sub-secretaries would say to one another, that Elliot was getting into his dotage, and "that boy would go to the devil, sir, as sure as you are born."

Fired by Austin's speculative questions, Lord Charles Barty supplemented his usual holiday amusement, which were not generally very varied, by gaining a little political knowledge—by picking up stones for Austin to fling at his father. His usual holiday amusements were these—to interrupt his sister's lessons as much as possible, and in the absence of the governess, to (as he called it) make hay in the school-room. When she came

back, boxed his ears, and turned him out, he would go to the stables, and coax and wheedle the stud-groom into giving him a surreptitious mount. Lastly, he would take his blind brother, Edward, out for a ramble through the park, through the wood, over the broad turnip-fields, up to the top-most height of Kingsdown, where Lord Edward might lie on the short turf, staring to heaven with his sightless eyes, and listening to the music of the five tall firs that moaned in the summer air overhead.

The way he gained his political information was this. Whenever he dined at table, he used to stay until his father went into the drawing-room. And in his father's house he was pretty sure to find himself, after the ladies were gone, sitting next to a pretty strong Whig. And from this tolerably strong Whig he would get opinions; the ultimate destination of which was, that they were poured out on the head of Mr. Elliot senior, to his great amusement.

So by this process, by Lord Charles Barty getting arguments and giving them to Austin, and by Austin letting them against his father, both these young gentlemen found themselves, at twenty-one, in a state of very advanced Radicalism. And, as all

young men at twenty-one, if they are worth anything, have their hero, so these two young gentlemen had theirs. I need not say that that hero was Sir Robert Peel. These furious young democrats had been ashamed to confess the fact to one another, the fact that their fetish was a so-called Tory, before the time when Lord Charles galloped over the goose on Putney Common. But so it was.

What was the reason that the wildest young Radicals of those times pinned their faith on Sir Robert Peel? I suppose because they knew, that should a pinch come, he would *act*. Would pitch party formulas to the winds. Horner's resolutions, and the Catholic question, had shown them that. Their instincts showed them that he was a true Radical. As he was in one sense.

When these two young gentlemen were elected Members of the Union, then the Thames got a-firc indeed. They uttered the most dreadful opinions. They came down to that house, sir (that was little Pickles of Brasenose; he was President), and they held in their hands all sorts of dreadful documents; and they had yet to learn: and they saw the honourable member opposite in his place, and played the deuce with him. They were the two most terrible

Radicals at the Union, these two. There was no doubt of that.

But after all said and done, they were neither of them true blue Radicals. The metal never rang clean and clear. They both stopped short. Austin politically, and Lord Charles socially.

Austin thought Lord Charles went too far. Perhaps he did. His proposition was to pull down the old house, and then begin to think about building it up again, with such materials as heaven should think fit to send; or should heaven send no materials, to let it build itself (which no house ever did yet, except the American house, which has tumbled down, and will have to be built all over again): this displeased Austin. Lord Charles also seemed to think that no one should do anything as long as any one else existed who could do it better; that we *must* have the exactly right man in the right place, or we were naught. At this Austin fired up, and said that in that case, Lord Charles and he might find themselves in the position, the one of a crossing-sweeper and the other of a shoeblack.

But in Lord Charles's model republic, there were to be no crossings, and no shoes. So Austin's illustration fell to the ground, and like many other silly

people, he abandoned the argument, from shame of having made a clumsy illustration.

“ Then what the deuce is to become of us ? ” asked Austin.

“ What does it matter ? What are a few worthless martyrs, like myself, in comparison to the great cause ? ”

Austin submitted that it did matter, and that they had better not be in too great a hurry. He would sometimes, indeed, laugh at the more wild of his friend’s speculations. In theory Austin was a real Radical ; but he did not wish his theories to be put into practice.

Lord Charles also stopped at a certain point. He had certain Radical theories concerning marriage, with which Austin one-half agreed. For instance, that the human race were all of the same species, and that no bar should be put to marriages between young people, if they fell in love. He was a high Tractarian, and made High-Church thought fit into his political theories with the most admirable dexterity ; his reverence for marriage and women was of the highest kind ; and he used to say that of all things he would admire a nobleman who would marry his gardener’s daughter. Austin agreed ; but

when he put the converse of the proposition about the gardener's son marrying—eh! Lord Charles got in a pet, and said that Austin never would be serious, and delighted in talking infernal nonsense out of pure aggravation.

“Don’t be cross, Charles,” said Austin.

“I ain’t cross,” said Lord Charles, angrily, blundering over Robin, and giving him a kick, at the same time using a word, which will never be used in the great republic.

He *was* cross. Austin had no right to say such horrible things. Amelia and the gardener’s boy. Good God!

Austin did not laugh at him. He had tripped him up, and was content. The human-race theory would not hold water it appeared.

Lord Charles was sulky for a time; but he called Robin to him, and put his cheek against the dog’s face, in that way asking forgiveness for having kicked him. Robin begged him with his great eyes to say nothing about it, and laid his beautiful head on his knee.

“You have been a fool, Austin,” said Lord Charles, sulkily. Englishmen are generally sulky when they have their own weapons turned against

them; have got out of temper with their friends, and want to make it up.

"Ah! I know," said Austin, laughing. "You mean about Miss—Lady Mewstone, you Jacobin! Come, let us argue the converse of your proposition on this case. Come on. There is nothing offensive here. I am Lord Mewstone's equal in talent, and in manners. Why should I not have married Miss Cecil? I consider she has thrown herself away."

"I don't think that. I think that you are his superior in everything, and yet I think you made a fool of yourself."

"Why?"

"Because they two were in love with one another, and because you passed by a girl who is far superior to that highty-tighty, ambitious, politics-chattering daughter of old Cecil's."

"Well; I know that now."

"Oh, you do, do you? And confess 'yourself a fool?"

"Yes."

"Then what a sublime fool you will look if you allow Aunt Maria to bully her into marrying Captain Hertford."

"Charles, you are mad."

"Raving mad," said Lord Charles; "but that is what the dear old soul is after. She has got the whip-hand of Hertford about something, and he, I suspect, has got the whip-hand of her."

"How do you find all this out?" said Austin, aghast.

"I listen to the old women talking," said he; "they know a precious sight more about it than you do."

"Well, but I can't listen to the old women. Tell us what you know."

"There's Tom going," said Lord Charles; "hadn't we better get on with our Livy, if we are going to do so at all?"

"Come, no nonsense," said Austin; "tell me what the old women told you."

"The old women didn't tell me anything. But I want to ask you a question. Why should not Eleanor Hilton marry Captain Hertford?"

"Why! why!" said Austin. "Do you want to drive me mad! Because I would cut the infernal scoundrel's throat, if he dare to look at her. That's why."

"But it don't matter to you. You have got no interest in her."

"Charles, I love her."

"You always did, I know, in a sort of way; but, with the memory of that sad affair with the Right Honourable the Countess of Mewstone so fresh on your heart——"

"Don't chaff. The thing is serious."

"I know it is," said Lord Charles; "but tell me one thing only. Do you really mean that you will ask Eleanor to be your wife?"

"I do."

"Hurrah! Now I'll tell you all I know. I was in town last night."

"Well," said Austin.

"I heard a conversation between my mother and Lord Saltire. You know Lord Saltire?"

"He always speaks to me," said Austin.

"Now then," continued Lord Charles, "old Hilton made a *faux pas*, about some French business, in 1806, and every one cut him, except your father. At this time, Lord Saltire, who had only had a trifling acquaintance with him before, thought that he would follow his favourite amusement of flying in the world's face, by taking him up, saying, that he had a profound admiration for a man with so few prejudices, or some piece of cynicism

of that kind; and although Hilton saw that Lord Saltire was only amusing himself by offending the world, yet friends were scarce, and Lord Saltire's humour suited his own, and they two knocked up some sort of a friendship."

"How did you find out all this?" asked Austin.

"By listening to the old women at their gossip. Don't interrupt."

"Just one moment. Have you heard Lord Saltire and her Grace speak of this before?"

"I have gathered what I have told you from another conversation. I will now give you the gist of the last.

"Lord Saltire began by saying, 'You don't know any eligible young gentleman who wants nine thousand a year, do you?' And she said, 'there is Charles listening to us, he is in want of exactly that sum,' and then there was some fun about it, and he went on. He said that Eleanor was, from some reason, completely under her aunt's thumb, and that Captain Hertford was eternally about the house."

"He is never there when I am," said Austin.

"Never mind that. He is there when you ain't there, which is much more important. He said,

that he had been to call on her, after what he had heard, and that it did really appear to be true: that the poor girl appeared cowed and beaten, and that her aunt seemed a dragon. But he said, in conclusion, ‘That is not all: the girl is left utterly friendless, and without society, with this enormous fortune, to the care of this old dragon of an aunt, and to a captain of dragoons, who is a great rascal. But what is uglier than all is this: old Hilton had a son who went to the dogs and died, and the last man who knew anything about him was this Captain Hertford, who has been a flame of the aunt’s.’ Now all this don’t look over particularly nice.”

“Now we had better get on with our work,” said Austin.

“By Jove, we must!” said Lord Charles; “but you will let me know what you are going to do.”

“Of course! How can I thank you enough? Come on.”

And on they went like young heroes. At half-past three, it was found that Lord Charles’s handsome blue eyes could not keep open any longer, in spite of coffee and tobacco, and that the curly head kept tumbling down on the “Riddle and Arnold.” Austin roused him up, and started him across Tom-

quad to his rooms in Peckwater. And Lord Charles walked straight across the grass, which he had, we believe, no right to do; and while in that bland intoxicated state, into which men get at three or four in the morning, a week before examination, he was thinking that there must surely be more than 17,000 stars visible. He so nearly walked into the pool, or pond, called Mercury, that he felt it necessary to sit down, and congratulate himself on his narrow escape.

And there he found that Austin's dog, Robin, had followed him. He was glad of this, for he could talk to Robin; and Robin was most charmed by the whole proceeding, and sat complacently down by the stone rim of the pond, prepared for any amount of conversation.

"Robin," said this silly young gentleman, "let us look into the pond, and see whether we can tell our fortune." So he leant over the pool, and saw, at first, nothing but the gold tassel on his cap. He took his cap off, and looked. Still not one hint of the future, only the outline of his handsome head reflected in the water. The stars were behind in the dark blue. Not one single black cloud between him and them. Oh! lying stars! oh! false, false water!

But the happy, heavy head fell down on something, and Robin nestled up against him, and dog and man fell fast asleep, there and then, in the middle of the quadrangle. One of the porters, who rose early to let the scouts in, saw him lying there, and roused him up. In times long after, a tall gentleman, stone-blind, unknown to the porter, but whom you will know soon, came to the porter, and asked about the circumstance. And the porter took him to the place, and pointed it out. "His lordship lay here, sir, with his head on his dixenary, and Mr. Elliot's dog along with 'un; and I thought he'd a caught his death of cold, surely."

"But it never hurt him, you see," said the blind stranger.

"Ah! no, poor dear! it never hurt he. Talk about your tufts, he *were* a tuft."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE very night on which Lord Charles slept by Mercury, Austin, dog-tired as he was, sat up and wrote this letter to his father:—

“ MY DEAR CHILD,—

“ If you don’t take my advice about having your razors properly set by an ‘expert,’ the end of it will be that you will be carried off to Bow Street, and charged with attempting self-destruction. The last time I came into your dressing-room, you had an open razor in your hand, and had hacked your chin so, that you were all in a gore of blood. Besides, it does not look nice to go down to your office, with your face stuck all over with patches of hat nap. If you have no self-respect, think of me.

“ Now attend to what I say, and don’t argue, or

fuss. Charles Barty and I go into the schools in five days. The responsibility I feel in leaving you to take care of yourself, will probably spoil my degree. Don't add to it, but obey me.

"Dear father, will you do this? Call on the Hiltons, and see what is going on there. Catch Lord Saltire, and make him tell you. It is an ugly business. I don't know what to do—I trust it all to you. Only go there and watch Captain Hertford and Aunt Maria."

"I will come up as soon as the examination is over. I shall not wait for the class list. I may get a fourth, and I may not. But I shall be equally dear to you either way, you self-willed conceited young person."

The answer was:—

"MY DEAR BOY,—

"You have made me so happy. I will see to what you mention. I thought you had given her up; and I have heard nothing new about Captain Hertford. It will be difficult for me to get anything out of Lord Saltire, for I hardly know him; *and I don't think he likes me*; however, I will try. I will watch for you like a terrier at a rat-hole.

"What care I what degree you take? Suppose you are plucked, come home to me, my boy, and I will teach you to forget it. I had rather, in fact, that you did not take honours. I think that you would do in the world quite as well without. Why don't you slip in quietly for a pass?—but, by the bye, it is too late, and I am sorry for it."

(Are there such things as white lies, after all? This was either a black one or a white one, for the old man was in a feverish state of anxiety about his son's degree, if it were only a fourth.)

"Don't you be an impertinent young jackanapes about my cutting myself shaving; it will be a long while before *you* do that, you monkey!"

Lord Charles Barty and Austin went into the schools devoutly hoping that they might not be "gulfed" (left among the pass men). But diligence and pluck will do great things. Lord Charles and Austin, having compared notes, came to the conclusion that it was all over with them, and Austin posted off to his father with the cheering intelligence that they were both probably "gulfed." Austin had certainly got his testamur, and so had his friend, but they were both quite hopeless—so hopeless, that on the terrible

day, Lord Charles actually went into the school's quadrangle, and up to that dreadful little door, and pushed into the crowd to hear the lists read. He thought one of them might be among the fourth. So he heard the first Class read through with indifference, but when Class II. was announced, and the first name in that Class was "Barty, Carolus, ex Æde Christi," his ears tingled in his head with joy; and when, after reading through two C's and a D, the clerk of the schools came to "Elliot, Augustinus, ex Æde Christi," he sent his cap flying in the air, and went fairly mad: Austin and he, to their unutterable amazement, had got seconds.

Then an insane terror possessed him lest any one, flying on the wings of the wind, should carry the news to Austin before himself. So he posted home to his rooms, told his servant to pack up a carpet-bag, and away he went, after getting a most fearful "jobation" from the Dean for daring to appear in his presence without his cap and gown.

"What do you mean by this impertinence, my lord? How dare you?"

"I am very sorry, sir. I have got a second, and I am excited."

"Got a second!—bah! The University is going to the——"

"Deuce?" suggested Lord Charles, who was afraid of something worse.

"Dogs, sir, dogs! How dare you say deuce in my presence! You can go down, my lord."

CHAPTER XV.

"Now, father," said Austin, the first night of his arrival, "what have you observed?"

"I have been a diligent and dutiful watchman, Austin; I have been there every day for six days, but, unfortunately, I have observed nothing at all."

"Then you think that the letter I wrote to you is all nonsense?"

"Far from it; I think you are quite right. I know that woman, Maria Hilton, my dear lad; I have known her almost all my life, and, unless she has much altered, she is just this—a selfish, unprincipled shrew."

"She always struck me as being something of that sort."

"I guess, I need not tell you wliy, that something of this sort is the matter. You know that she is independent?"

"No; I never knew it."

"She had fifteen thousand pounds by her *father's* will."

"I did not know that; I always thought she lived on her brother. But what has that to do with it?"

"Silly! it makes her independent—it gives an impudence to her face, and a loud tone to her voice towards her little niece, which she would never have if she were dependent on her bounty."

"Good; you are wiser than I."

"That is very easy to be, goose! Well, she has sailed her boat in troubled waters, and so has Captain Hertford. I suspect that they have some sort of mutual confidence, and that both of them would like to have the whip-hand of Eleanor, and of Eleanor's six thousand a year. She has no friends—her father took good care that she should have none, by his obstinate pride—and at this present moment I believe the case stands thus:—that Aunt Maria is trying to bully and wheedle poor little Eleanor into marrying Captain Hertford."

"Then," said Austin, "I'll tell you what we'll do—that is, you and I and Robin."

"And what is that?"

"Why, we'll go to Wilton Crescent, when both

Aunt Maria and Captain Hertford are there, and I will take a thick walking-stick and beat him about the head with it, while Robin bites *her* heels, and you pull her nasty old cap and wig off, and chuck them out of window."

"I think that will be the best plan," said Mr. Elliot. "Then I will come with you at two to-morrow, if I can get away from the office. Don't bring too big a stick, or else you will kill the man, and get hung, and that is very disagreeable—there are always such a lot of people to stare at you."

"Then that plan of proceedings is settled," said Austin, who knew how his father loved a "dry joke."

"Yes, that is settled; don't be later than two, and don't bring anything thicker than a malacca cane. Now let us change the subject. Do you know the Isle of Ronaldsay, by Jura?"

"I have never been there," said Austin, knowing that, now his father had had his joke, his real plan was coming. "I know the song:—

"On Jura's heath how sweetly swell
The murmurs of the mountain bee;
How sweetly mourns the writhed shell
On Jura's shore, its parent sea.'

Is that any use to the present discussion?"

"A great deal. I see you are in love with the island, and I shall probably want you to start there to-morrow night, if you can get ready."

"Hadn't I better start to-night?" said Austin, very much amused, but knowing perfectly well that his father had a scheme in his head, and a good one too.

"No, not to-night. Before you start, I want to see whether Miss Elliot, senior, has any objection to come for a cruise in the Pelican. She has two strings to her bow, and I am the second one. She will probably come, and bring her niece. The Pelican is lying at Liverpool, waiting to take me through the Western Islands. If Miss Hilton dreams that you are to be one of the party, she either won't come, or won't bring her niece. Therefore, I order you, as soon as I have my answer to-morrow, to depart suddenly and secretly to Glasgow, and from thence to get the best way you can to Jura, from Jura to Donaldsay, from thence across the Kyle to Ronaldsay, and find out as much as you can about the set of the tide through the Sound of Islay before I arrive in the Pelican."

"By Jove," said Austin, "you are a jewel."

"So the plan of pulling off Aunt Maria's wig falls through for the present, then," said Mr. Elliot.

"For the present," said Austin.

"Oh, only for the present, of course," said Mr. Elliot. "Good night; mind your candle against the curtains."

The next evening Austin waited for Lord Charles at Paddington, for he knew that he would come with the news of the class-list. He heard the astounding intelligence of his friend's good fortune and his own; and, just giving himself time to tell his friend the neat little plan about the island of Ronaldsay, he jumped into a Hansom cab, and told the man to go to Mortlake."

The man did not seem to know where it was, so Austin said,—"Go to Putney, then!"

Now, in the year 1845, telling a man to go to Putney, was the same as telling a man to go to the denee. And so the cabman took off his nose-bag (or rather, the horse's nose-bag), and said, "Bar sell!"

"What's the matter with the man?" said Austin.
"Didn't you hear me tell you to go to Putney?"

The man strapped the nose-bag under his seat, took up the strut, and mounted the box; then he opened the trap-door above Austin's head, and looking down on him, said—

"I think you told me to go to Putney just now."

"Confound it! What is the matter with the man?"

"Well, now, look here," said the man. "A cabman has his feelings the same as any other man. You, and such as you, may think that he ain't, but he have. And when them feelings is lacerated, he naturally cuts up rough. I never said nothink to you, but without provercation you tells me to go to Putney. Now I tell you what it is, *I'm blessed if I don't go*, and you may take your change out of that!" And go he did.

If it had not been for this little escapade on the cabman's part, he would have started an instant sooner, and would not have seen Lord Charles walk past him just before the horse got in motion, walking between Captain Hertford and a man whom Austin knew as Captain Jackson, a trifling circumstance, but well remembered after. "Charles has got among the Tories," he said to himself. And so Charles had.

We must pass over Mr. Elliot's sensations on hearing of Austin's good fortune. He was both astonished and delighted. "Good heavens!" he said to himself, "if the dear boy has got a second with so little exertion, his talents must be of first-rate

order. See how idle and giddy that lad has been, by Jove! That lad can do anything after this. An idle, giddy young butterfly, and a second: by Jove it is amazing; he will take the world by storm: for—with his manners, and temper, and talents, he'll take the world by storm. I am glad he *was* idle; it is a great comfort to me that he was idle. It has shown what he is made of. A second, too!"

Mr. Elliot either did not know, or did not choose to remember, how painfully Charles had worked, and he did *not* know the awful gulf there was between Austin's second, and a first. Austin would not have undeceived him for ten thousand pounds that night.

They dined together alone. If any young gentleman, reading these pages, makes the reflection that it must have been rather a bore for Austin to dine *tête-à-tête* with his father, let me assure him that on this occasion it was not the case. Neither of them bored the other. Once, just after dinner, Mr. Elliot, looking across, under the lamp, caught Austin's eyes gazing affectionately at him. He took no notice, but Austin looked so handsome, so good, so triumphant, that the good man went up to his dressing-room for a moment to look for his spectacles.

Perhaps that was the happiest night of all. I

cannot say, for Austin had, from childhood, waded on breast high among summer flowers, and had hardly known sorrow. That merry face had, however, the capability of a different expression—an expression of sorrow and furious anger combined, such as one sees in the face of a child when it is what we call "*very* naughty ;" a look which at the same time pleads for pity and hurls defiance. No man but one had ever seen that expression on Austin's face, and that one man only on one occasion. The man was Captain Hertford, and the occasion was that of their drive together from Lyn y Rhaiadr to Bangor.

"And now, dad," said Austin, lolling on the sofa, "about—I beg pardon—anent Ronaldsay."

"You ought to have started to-night, monkey; and you should have, if you had got a beggarly third, or anything of that sort. Of course, I am bitterly disappointed at your missing your first; and I think that, after such a fiasco, you had better get out of the way till people have forgotten all about it."

"Child, child," said Austin, without moving, "you are out of your mind!"

"I think it will be the best way. Start for Glasgow to-morrow morning, and after Glasgow you must go north by post."

" How many stamps shall I want?"

" By post," said Mr. Elliot, scornfully, " and get across the Kyle of Ronaldsay in one of the fishing-boats."

" Very well," said Austin; " now tell me this—What do *you* think of Eleanor?"

" You mean really?"

" Yes, I mean really."

" Well! I think she has more determination and strength of character in her little close-set mouth than fifty Aunt Marias; and that if—well, if there is what you young fellows coarsely call a row, that she might beat Aunt Maria. But she is an affectionate and sensitive little thing, and it will require something very much out of the way to make her show fight at all; and Aunt Maria is coarse and ill-tempered, though cowardly; and she will bully that little thing, and frighten her into submission until—until—something or another happens to make little Eleanor show fight. There."

" A lame and impotent conclusion," said Austin.
" Good night."

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL the coast of Argyleshire, and the Mull of Cantire, and the mountains beyond, were wakening up under the same sun which decorated Ben More of Ronaldsay with ribs of gold. Those who stood on the rough little pier in front of the few fishing huts which make the village of Ronaldsay, and looked eastward, saw the fields on the mainland gleaming with the gold of spring, and behind them, a wilderness of purple mountain flecked and dotted with wreaths of silver mist, flying and dissolving before the morning sun. Those who turned and looked westward saw the sheets of heath rolling up into the great sharp mountain, embroidered with a curious fretwork of bright green grass from beside the rocky watercourses. But whether they looked east or west, there was a

softness in the air, and a gladness in their hearts, which told them spring was come, and that the winter, so terrible to them, poor souls, had gone howling off to the northward.

The wind was south, and the tide pouring down the Kyle of Ronaldsay, knocked up a little sea. And through that sea, a boat with two sails came leaping, and springing, and plunging towards the shore; and when she was near enough, three or four fine fellows jumped into the surf, and had her high and dry in no time.

And then from this boat there dismounted a young gentleman, and his portmanteau, and his dog: the like of which young gentleman and his portmanteau, they had never seen before; but the like of whose dog, they had seen very often indeed. It was Austin and Robin. Austin stood, splendidly attired, handsome, good-humoured, looking among the surrounding highlands; and Robin was making friends with three or four collies exactly like himself, and half a hundred short-legged terriers.

And as he stood upon the beach, an old man—almost the only one who could speak English, with that courteous independence which we admire so much in the Scotch, both Highland and Lowland,

when it does not develop into impertinence, asked “what he could do for his honour?”

“A very well-timed question, sir,” said Austin. “I want to stay here for a week.”

The old fisherman at once did what Scotchmen always seem to do in a difficulty—sent for the minister; and the minister did what Scotch ministers always do when they are sent for—came.

“There is not a place in the island into which you can put your head, sir, except my house,” said he the instant he caught sight of Austin, saying in Gaelic “Take that gentleman’s portmanteau up to the manse instantly.” At all events, up to the manse it went; shout the gentleman, “Hi!” and “Hold hard!” never so loudly.

“My dear sir,” said Austin, “I never dreamt of invading you like this. But, to answer for my respectability, I have got a letter of introduction from——”

“Never mind, sir. Just think what an *enormous* windfall an educated gentleman is to me. A week only, said you, sir?”

“Not more.”

“I would it were a year. Are you in Parliament, sir?”

“ Not yet,” said Austin, blushing.

“ If you were I would ask you to say a word for us poor islanders, sir. The winters here are unco long, sir, and we are very very poor. I will show you the wonders of our island, sir. I cannot show you a natural temple, like Staffa, or an artificial one, like Iona ; but I will show you how men can keep body and soul together under very adverse circumstances, and be patient, honest, and godly the while. And when you are in Parliament, you’ll, may be, remember the Island of Ronaldsay, and speak a word for the Scottish poor.”

“ But what does your landlord do for you?”

“ The island is a loss to him ; and who could be foolish enough to pitch money into these bogs ? Our place is in Canada, I fear. The winter is very long, and we are very very poor.”

“ I beg to call your attention to the fact, my dear sir, that you have not read my letter from the Mactavish.”

“ And I beg to observe, my dear sir, that I welcomed you to my house before I knew you had one,” answered the minister. “ Why, my dear sir, if you were deaf and dumb, the mere sight of your clothes would make you welcome. We see no dyed gar-

ments from Bozrah here. The Mactavish would pine and die in breeks, sir."

"He is a good fellow, though."

"He is, sir. He has the inexcusable fault of poverty; but that is nigh his only one."

"How come the family to be so poor?"

"An old story. In 1545, or thereabout, his grandfather went away to Edinburgh, with some long-legged, young Highland chiels; and he wandered south, the loon, past Dunbar and Carlisle, to a place they call Derby, or some such name. The daft, rintherout callant. And the Government asked where he was going, and he said to London. And so they hanged him at Carlisle, and the present estates came into the family by his son's wife."

"And this happened so long ago as 1545?" said Austin, laughing.

"I am not sure," said the old gentleman, with a sly laugh. "It may have been 1545, 1645, or even 1745. I am only sure of one thing, that it was na 1845." And, by the time he had made his little joke, they had got to the manse.

"By the bye," said the minister, before going in, "you know that we had him here for two nights in this very house."

"What, the Pr——

"The Prince, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir. Two nights after the Stornaway business, he landed here. The wind was strong from the west, and he was driven across to Ronaldsay."

"Yet I thought I could have accounted for every hour of his time between Lewis and Benbecula," said Austin.

"A mistake, my dear sir. I can show you the bedroom where he slept.—Is it true that Sir Robert is going to continue the income-tax in spite of the surplus (not that it matters to me, God knows); and can you explain me why? Only as a matter of curiosity: for we are too poor here to mind income-taxes; but, God be praised, we are not so poor as the Donaldsay folk."

"Not so poor as the Donaldsay folk." Those words dwelt with Austin. He had never seen poverty before, and he told the good minister so frankly. He saw enough now. Chronic poverty and want of the most hideous kind. The row of cottages, or rather hovels by the harbour side, were miserable enough; but it was up among the little cot farms in the hill that he saw, for the first time,

what utter poverty meant; up in these hovels on the hill-side, built with loose stone (there is no lime in Ronaldsay), through which every wind of heaven blew, summer and winter; with their little patches of oats and potatoes. Here, indeed, was more than Irish misery.

"We depend," said the minister, "mostly on our potatoes here. Ronaldsay is a cold island, and oats are swear to ripen. The potatoes here look nice."

Poor fellow! He did not dream, that these same potatoes, their only hope, would have turned to stinking carrion before August.

As for Austin, he went in and out of these hovels with his friend the minister all the first morning; and then began thinking for himself, perhaps for the first time in his life: with what degree of correctness the reader must judge. "All this silly windy turbulence in Ireland," he thought, "has origin in very great part from chronic poverty. And yet here are a race of men, as poor as the poorest Irish, superior to the Irish in physique and intelligence, by the most enormous interval; a race who in courage and endurance are notoriously not surpassed in the world; a race attached to particular religious tenets as firmly as the Irish; one might almost say a priest-

ridden race; and yet what does one find? Patience instead of turbulence, manly independence instead of servility, and an almost entire absence of crime, instead of continued horrible outrages. It was a puzzle.

"How do you account for it, Mr. Monroe," said he, addressing the clergyman.

"For what sir?" said the old man, looking quietly up.

"For what I have been saying."

"You have been saying nothing."

And no more he had, but only thinking.

He apologized and stated his case.

"The Irish," said the minister, strongly, "are a priest-ridden people."

"So are the Scotch," said Austin.

"I wish ye were just a minister yersell, ye'd ken how much truth there was in *that*; if ye had the handling o' em, ye'd find na a thrawner lot than ye are thinking," replied the old man laughing. "But, even if there were a grain of truth in your assertion of their being priest-ridden, you must still allow that your Scottish minister is a superior man altogether to your Irish priest."

"Why should I allow that?" said Austin.

"For politeness' sake," said the minister. "But I will tell you a secret. Not only are the Scottish ministers a higher class of men than the Irish priests, but, what is of more importance, the Scottish population is as superior to the southern Irish population as a horse is superior to a donkey."

"That is a libel," said Austin.

"The greater the truth the greater the libel, Master Oxonian," said the minister.

"But I won't have it," said Austin; "I have seen very noble Irish people."

"Well then, we must put some of it down to education. There is the fact, account for it how you may."

"But look here, my dear sir," said Austin. "Can't one do anything among these folks? I mean, can I do nothing? I have money. If you were to point out proper cases to me, couldn't I leave money with them? You hesitate, because the lark is singing overhead. Think of the horrible long winter which will come on us so suddenly, and then say whether or no you dare refuse my offer."

"We are not beggars, Mr. Elliot. We have no claim on you."

"I tell you that you have. These are the first

poor I have ever seen, God forgive me. I have no tenantry. I have no poor with more claim on me than these poor souls. Why, I gave nine pounds for this pin which is in my scarf, the other day. No claim quotha!"

The old man sat silent for a moment, and then spoke low and quiet. "I dare not decline to take any money that you may leave, Mr. Elliot; no, I dare not when I think of the winter which is coming. I may never account to you for that money, but I will account to Christ. He will be a more inexorable auditor than you, Mr. Elliot. You have guessed, sir, in some way, what we want. We want money. We have no circulation of money. We have here potatoes and oats, every bit of which we require, and fish, which we want also; but which, being our only staple of trade, must be sacrificed in Glasgow, to get cash for tobacco and groceries. We have no circulation of money. The Mactavish, who would give the coat off his back, has to educate his sons, and gets no rent from the island. He leaves us alone. We can ask no more, and have no right to ask so much. But he sins against his tenantry and himself."

"How?"

"His stomach is too high to let the shootings. It lies with you and him to make Ronaldsay almost a Paradise. You are rich. If you could persuade him to let you the shootings, and were only to live here three months in the year, it would make a wonderful difference in Ronaldsay. You have no idea what the circulation of another three hundred pounds a year in the island would be."

"Is there any game?" asked Austin.

"Not much," said the minister at present; "but if *you* would take the island, *I* would take care there should be. I would use my influence, my dear sir. If—"

"Priestcraft," said Austin.

"You are a daft young gentleman, sir, and I am very angry with you. But listen to reason. You will want a moor some day; go round our island and examine its capabilities."

"I will. Now, here is an envelope, which you must pledge yourself not to open till I am gone."

This envelope contained an I O U from Austin to Mr. Monroe, for fifty pounds. The reader must form his own opinion on this piece of extravagance.

Austin was there for ten days, and before three days were passed, he had managed by a careless

bonhommie, or possibly by some quality far far higher than that ; to make himself beloved by every one in the island whom he met. For there was about him a great-hearted geniality, which no one could resist. The Duchess of Cheshire had said that Charles's new friend seemed a very loveable person ; and now old Elspie Macdonald, whose grandsons had been across to Ireland, hobbled up to the manse, with her dreadful wrinkled old face below her shoulders, and gave him a great shell, "a Chama cor," and refused the half-crown that Austin offered her. Austin knew as much about shells as about the Rosetta stone or the Fonetic Nuz ; but he saw that the old crone meant him a high compliment, and let her see that he did.

A noble young kilted Highlander was told off, by reason of his speaking English, to show him the round of the island.

"A remarkable laddie, sir," said the minister ; "a Frankenstein monster of my ain making. I was fearful at one time that I had lent my hand to the making of a poet ; but that sin has been spared me among others. He bolts knowledge in a brutal and gluttonous way, sir, without chewing, like a dog swallowing meat, a gobble and a swallow, and

then ready for more. But he has a dog's digestion, sir, it doesna turn to wind wi' him, for which we must be thankful. If ye have lent your hand to pit seven devils of education into a man, ye would choose a man of smaller carcass. For if such a one as Gil Macdonald gangs awa among the tombs, it will be no safe for the passers-by."

So for eight days Austin brushed the heather, led by his long-legged friend, returning to the manse at nightfall, as happy as a king, and as tired as a dog. His eight happy days were gone before he could look round.

The two young men, starting early one morning, walked westward through the great bog, which fills up the centre of the Island of Ronaldsay, with the sharp crystalline peak of Ben More of Ronaldsay right before them, lying in a dark brown cone above the mists. And as they toiled across the bog, through the morning, they saw that mist dissolving, curling, brooding, in dark hollows, like piles of wool ; rising in fantastic wreaths, which were melted and swept away by the sea breeze ; and, as a last poor resource, hiding in clefts and glens, only to perish ignominiously before the steady blaze of the sun, as

he towered stronger and stronger each moment over the distant hills of Argyleshire.

So on through the bog, until the heather began to roll and rise, and then leap up into scarps and terraces, and then run into long ribs, along which they walked, and saw mirror-like lakes, hundreds and hundreds of feet below. Some were perfectly calm, and some streaked with bands of frosted silver, as the wind, wandering into the sheltered corries, caught the surface here and there. Then there was no more heather, but a steep cone of yellow grass and grey stone. And last of all the summit—a breezy platform twelve feet square. Below, the ocean, with a hundred fantastically shaped islands: above, the vast blue sky: and around, silence, except the gentle whispering of the south wind among the grass stalks.

“ Gil ! Gil ! ” said Austin, after a pause. “ This is a glorious country.”

“ Aye, it’s a braw country,” replied Gil, “ in summer time. But we are unco poor, and the winters are very long.”

“ I shall think of you in the long winter nights, Gil,” said Austin. “ The winter nights are very long.”

"Aye, indeed they are, both cold and long."

"If you feel them so, Colin," said Austin, "here in this free island, think what they must be to poor prisoners, alone in jail. Think of that. Suppose you or I had to spend the winter in jail, what should we do?"

"I should ding out my brains against the wa', and dee like a man," said Colin, rapidly, snatching at the grass. "What gars ye think such things?"

"I don't know," replied Austin, looking out over the sea; "the rule of '*contrairy*,' I fancy. Being so wild and free up here, half way between earth and heaven, makes one think of the other extreme, I suppose."

"Aye," said Colin, "if the gentles are no miserable by visitation of God, it is forced upon the puir bodies to make themselves miserable. It would be a hard business for some of them if it were na for the de'il, who, like a true gentleman, is aye ready to assist a neighbour. Well, some amount of misery is necessary for the enjoyment of life, I suppose. I suppose you have no wish ungratified in life, that ye make yourself miserable with thinking of jails?"

"I have one wish," said Austin.

"I may not speir what it is?" said Colin, looking up eagerly.

"Aye, and get your answer, my boy. When will the swallows be here?"

"In a few days."

"I am waiting for one of them. A little house-martin, that shall be on my bosom till one of us die. I tried to tame a peregrine once, but she has soared to her eyrie and left me."

Colin understood him so perfectly that he said not one word. And if you turn on me and tell me, that there are not here and there such Highlanders as Gil Macdonald, I turn on you, and tell you, that you have been staring at mountains, while you should have been studying men.

So Austin, Gil, and the dog Robin, sat for a while on the summit of Ben More of Ronaldsay, and heard nothing but the wind among the grass stalks.

"There is not one cloud in the sky," said Austin, at last.

"There is one," said Gil. "I have been watching it this ten minutes. Look southward."

"By Jove!" said Austin, "it is the smoke of a steamer."

"The Swallow is coming," said Gil.

"I think so, indeed, Gil," said Austin, peering eagerly to the southward. "That must surely be the Pelican. Let us hurry down."

And as they went, Gil said, "Listen to me, Mr. Elliot. We are going to lose you?"

"Yes," said Austin; "I am away with the Swallow."

"Will you take me with you? I will follow you like a dog, for as long a time as you appoint, without wages. I——"

"Oh, stop," said Austin; "don't say any more. It is quite impossible, Gil. I don't deserve this confidence. And I have a servant already. You cannot tell how you distress me."

"You should think twice before you refuse me," said Gil, eagerly. "You don't know the Highlanders; we are so cunning, so brave, so devoted. Think twice."

"It is quite impossible. Don't think me unkind, but it is quite impossible."

"I'll think of you in the long winter's nights," said Gil. "Will ye no come back to us?"

"Aye, that I will," said Austin, eagerly.

Gil said no more. By the time they got to

the town the population were all out on the beach, looking at the Pelican as she approached, stemming the surf's current of the Kyle of Ronaldsay with her beautiful sharp bows.

Austin had been prepared for this. His portmanteau was ready packed and in the boat. The good minister was ready in the stern sheets, and two sturdy Highlandmen were ready to stand to their oars.

"Ye'll come back to us again?" said an old man, as he jumped into the boat, acting as spokesman to the population.

"Aye, that I will," said Austin. And so he did.

"Are we to say good-bye for ever, Mr. Elliot?" said Mr. Monroe, after they were in the boat.

"For ever! ah, no!" said Austin. "I will come back again. Think of me in the winter-time."

"See here," said Mr. Monroe, "I have opened this envelope. You should take it back. Can you afford it?"

"Tush, my dear sir, perfectly. If I cannot, it is not for you to stand between me and the poor. Come on board, and let me introduce you to my father."

But the old man would not. He was shy of

strangers, he said. He begged Austin would excuse him, and Austin did so.

As the boat neared the yacht, the steam was shut off. The swell in the Kyle was short and bubbling. Before Austin had time to say good-bye, they were alongside. In the next minute, Robin was on board, and the portmanteau. In the next, he saw there was only Eleanor to receive him, and then looking over the side, he saw that the yacht was under way, and that the boat had sheered off for the shore, dropping astern every instant, as the sturdy rowers plied their oars in the short chopping sea, and the yacht slid on against the current.

Then he hurried Eleanor up on the empty quarter-deck, and drawing her arm through his, bade her wave her handkerchief, while he stood bare-headed. She did so, and there came a wild cheer from the shore. Soon after, the village was hid by a turn in the Kyle, and that was the last of Ronalda for a season.

Gil Macdonald had climbed up on a little cliff near the end of the village, and stood watching it all, with his hand shading his eyes; and then and there he determined that if Austin did not come back in a year, that he, Gil, would go south, and seek him

again. For the most extraordinary thing was, that our merry, gentle Austin had, after only one week's acquaintance, become a sort of necessity to this noble young Highland lion. Here had appeared to Gil Macdonald, fretting, after the manner of his nation, in his miserable little island prison, for the chance to go forth into the world, and do battle with his peers —here had appeared to him a noble young Englishman, a high-bred gentleman, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, in carriage and dress far beyond anything Gil had ever seen before; and yet this apparition had treated Gil like a gentleman and an equal all the time he had been with him. The country where such as he came from must be the country for a Highland lad to win his way in. And as for Austin himself, he would follow such a man as that to the very world's end.

He felt something in his hand. It was the gold Austin had given him. He almost felt inclined to throw it away, but he put it hastily in his sporran and resumed his watch.

The yacht slid round the farthest black promontory of Ronaldsay, and the spring twilight came creeping over Argyleshire from the east, till only the summit of Ben More of Ronaldsay had a faint gleam of pink

on the side towards the sun, who had now fairly northed from his equinox. But still Gil stood looking after the ship, with his hand over his eyes.

We shall see how he came south before Austin came north, and when and where he found him.

CHAPTER XVII.

Do you care for the man at the wheel? I do not, one farthing! Elsewhere he may be a good man or a bad man, or may have eyes or ears; but when he is at the wheel, he becomes the man at the wheel, and is not supposed to have any more consciousness of passing events, than the spanker-boom.

As a rule, you will find that people do *not* mind the man at the wheel. They are very apt to take uncommon little notice of the officer of the watch, but of the man at the wheel they take actually none whatever. And Austin and Eleanor on this occasion never troubled their heads about there being such a person in existence; and as for Mr. Slapper, the sailing-master, he was in the forecastle telegraphing with his arms, like a madman, to the helmsman.

Eleanor, it appeared, had been taken by surprise.

She had run up on deck without her bonnet; she had thrown a loose grey-hooded cloak (what was irreverently called in those days a fool's-cap and bells) over her shoulders, and she had her hand on her head, to prevent her hair blowing about. She looked positively beautiful; and when Robin leaped upon her, mad with joy, and her hair got loose, she looked more beautiful still.

Three times they walked up and down the deck in silence; but in all her Majesty's dominions—nay, in all the world—there were no two hearts so light as theirs.

Eleanor spoke first. "I thought," she said, "your dear father looked guilty. I felt sure we should pick you up somewhere."

"Did Aunt Maria guess?"

"Foolish! no, or we should not have been here. And how did you like Ronaldsay, Austin?"

"Very much."

"Have you fallen in love with any one there? Remember, I insist on being told. I always have been told."

"Yes," said Austin, "I have fallen in love at last."

"I should like to see her."

“ You shall.”

“ You will tell me all about it.”

“ Yes,” said Austin, “ I will tell you all about it.” And, as he said so, he drew her towards him, and kissed her ; and, as he did so, his eyes met hers, and she saw it all now. And her heart was filled with a peaceful happy content, and she laid her head upon his breast.

She had won him ; won him from all of them ; the gentlest, handsomest, cleverest man in all England ; so she thought in her pride. I should like to have seen the flash of furious scorn which would have come over that noble little face if any one had told her that she was throwing herself away, and that with her vast fortune she might have married an earl. She was proud of her money, and knew the value of it. She was doubly proud of it now. It would be Austin’s.

“ And so I caught you all alone,” said Austin.

“ Yes, all alone. Mr. Elliot is in the cabin.”

“ He is most impertinent and disrespectful,” said Austin. “ He should have been on deck to receive me. How dare he? Where is Aunt Maria?”

“ Oh, good gracious,” said Eleanor, eagerly, “ haven’t you heard?”

"Of course I have heard," said Austin. "The sea-gulls and cormorants told me, while I was at Ronaldsay. But I shouldn't mind hearing your story; for they all spoke at once, and quarrelled, and contradicted, and I couldn't make out the truth of it."

"Why," said Eleanor, "the day before yesterday, she was scolding old James on deck, and he answered her just as she was at the top of the companion, and she turned on him in her lofty, imperious way, and she caught her foot on the sill, and down the ladder she went, head over heels, and she has bumped and bruised herself all over."

"Has she hurt herself much?"

"No; but she is terribly cross. She sent for your father to her bedside, and requested him to put her on shore on a desert island, with a week's provisions, and some beads and tomahawks. For she said, that might possibly purchase the forbearance of savages, although she could not that of a pampered and ungrateful domestic."

"She is afraid of old James," said Austin.

"I know she is; and I am afraid of her."

"You must not be," said Austin.

"But I *am*, and I shall be. You don't know

what a terrible woman she is. Sometimes only, she is violent. But, at ordinary times, she has a continuous voluble way of scolding, which is more dreadful still. She does not raise her voice, but goes on for half an hour together, indignantly asserting her own ease, from different points of view, until I am confused and frightened. Any statement of my ease only makes her go over the old ground, a note higher, for another half-hour. She can fairly scold me into submission. And I warn you that I am completely and utterly in her power. When she takes to scolding me in that way I have neither temper nor courage to oppose her. Remember this."

Austin reflected for a moment. I am glad, he thought, that old James forms part of that household. "Eleanor," said he, "do you know who old James is?"

"Very well. He was a shoebblack-boy, whom my father picked up out of the streets for charity. They were nearly the same age. He came to be his servant when they were both sixteen. He was at the taking of the Bastile with my father and Lord Liverpool."

"It might be considered only decently polite," said Austin, "if I were to go and see my father."

"And I ought to go to Aunt Maria."

"She will be in a pretty way when she hears of this," said Austin.

"Of what?" said Eleanor.

"Of my having proposed to you, and of your having accepted me," said Austin. At which Eleanor ran away, and Austin went down to see his father.

Mr. Elliot was sitting in the old place, at the head of the cuddy table, over his maps and plans, and Austin said, "Well, young fellow."

And Mr. Elliot said, "Aunt Maria has tumbled down the companion, and abraded herself."

"And I have proposed to her niece, and have been accepted," said Austin. "Come on deck, and let me see your dear old face by sunlight."

So the father and son went on deck, in the spring twilight, as the yacht sped out from the Kyle of Ronaldsay, into the more open sea beyond, towards South Uist and Benbecula. The man at the wheel may have smiled at the little passages he may have noticed between Austin and Eleanor; but he did not smile when he saw Mr. Elliot's arm round Austin's neck, and the two heads, one so old and the other so young, bent down together in consultation.

And so, through the long spring evening, the steamer throbbed on her peaceful way, against the current, through the Kyle of Ronaldsay. Right and left, the rocky shores stooped down into the green sea water, and everywhere land and water were divided by a slender thread of silver surf. In one place the rocks came down grey, wrinkled, and bare, clothed for the last few feet only with a band of black sea-weed. In another the rock was less abrupt, and partly feathered with ivy and yew, and here and there a pleasant lawn of short green turf. In some places the rock fell away altogether, and a sheep-cropped, limestone down, came rolling and sweeping to the sea, which here was bounded by a half-moon of bright yellow sand. In one place there was a large fishing village, of white-washed stone cottages, where the women sat at the doors netting nets, and the old men were hobbling about tinkering old boats, and where the boys cheered them, and ran bare-legged along the shore. And, soon after, they met the able-bodied men of this village, in their fishing-boats, drifting homewards on the tide. In one place, along this beautiful strait, there was a flock of sheep, feeding high overhead, watched by a little Highland laddie, whose dog barked, and ran to and fro when

he saw the ship, and whose bark was joyously echoed by happy Robin, from the deck. And, at another place, there was a wee bit kirk and a manse, on the hill-side, with the minister out in his garden, who took off his hat to them, and whose courteous salute they returned as the ship sped on.

“A happy land, Eleanor,” said Austin; “a land of settled faith, of intelligence, of truth, and of order; a land not so over-populated but that the best men may be recognised and revered. Would you like to live here?”

“I would live anywhere with you, Austin, even in Italy.”

And at night, as the sun went down in the west, the ship began to plunge, and then to roll, and she plunged and rolled under the reeling stars, across the water which lay between the Kyle of Ronaldsay and Benbecula, for the south wind, blowing steadily, met the tides pouring southward through the sleat, and the sea was heavy.

Eleanor and Austin walked the deck until the stars came out, and the ship began to dive and leap, and send sheets of spray flying to leeward, and then she went below. The steward was superintending the laying of a cloth for supper. Mr. Elliot was in his

own cabin ; so Eleanor, with an anxious look, feeling that her time was come, that there was no one to delay and gossip with, made towards Aunt Maria's cabin.

Aunt Maria was sitting up in her bed, with her maid beside her. She was in an ill temper, and her coarse violent face looked more coarse and violent than ever. There was something worse than coarseness or violence in those deep-sunk eyes and knotted eyebrows, but no one saw it as yet.

"Aunt, dear," said Eleanor, "what shall I bring you for supper?"

"You wicked girl!" said Aunt Maria ; "you miserable girl ! So your lover has come on board, has he ? So all this voyage was a settled plan between old Elliot and you to meet this profligate young idiot at Ronaldsay ! Oh, how I do hate meanness and ingratitude ! And look at the low meanness of this proceeding ! and then, when you have reflected, if you can reflect, on all that I have done for you, think of the ingratitude ! "

What Aunt Maria had done for Eleanor was—to live at her expense to save her own income, and to worry her life out. Eleanor *knew* this. But in the presence of this scolding woman, with her straight

overhanging upper lip, her bushy eyebrows, and her deep-set eyes, she began to feel guilty; she was, as she told Austin, a coward, and she said nothing.

"How long has he been on board?" snarled Aunt Maria; "and what has he said to you?"

"He has been on board about four hours, Aunt," said Eleanor; "as to what he has said to me, all I care for is this—he has proposed to me and I have accepted him."

"And you have dared?" said Aunt Maria, furiously.

"Yes," said Eleanor, quietly, "I have dared; I dare do anything when he is beside me. If you can get me away from him you may do anything with me. I am afraid of you, and you know it; but *you* are afraid of *him* and of his father."

"Then you have accepted this boy, you wretched girl!" said Aunt Maria.

"I have, Aunt."

"And Captain Hertford."

"Captain Hertford!" cried Eleanor, the warm French blood of her mother coming to her help, "that villain! that blackleg! How dare you couple my name with his?"

"How dare I, you silly girl?"

“Aye, how dare you! You would like him to get possession of me, and then, by his sheer brutality, to get the management of my nine thousand a year—you would like that!”

“I think you want guiding, child; but you are out of your mind to talk to me like that.”

“I am not. You and I and Captain Hertford are bound together by a tie of deep disgrace; no one knows the truth but we three. Now, I am a coward, but I am no fool—if you press me with that man’s attentions I will tell Austin everything.”

“*You* tell him!” said Aunt Maria, scornfully; “suppose *I* were to tell him?”

“In that case,” said Eleanor, “he and I should be married just the same; only, if I know the chivalrous soul of the man, more quickly than if you held your tongue. And in this case also, our secret would be worthless. You would be turned out of our house—you would have to live on your fifteen thousand pounds, and Captain Hertford would have to live on you!”

“Then,” said Aunt Maria, scornfully, “if you have this hold over us, why not get rid of us at once? Why not tell him?”

“Because he is going into public life—because I

should ruin him by hanging such a chain round his neck."

" You are a fool!" said Aunt Maria; " there is hardly a public man in the country without his skeleton. Tell him: I defy you! You know, if you told him, he would not marry you; that is the truth!"

" It is not the truth, Aunt Maria. You are like all entirely worldly people, one-half of you, a very foolish person; you calculate only by the lowest motives, and never take higher motives into consideration. Austin is a pure, noble, high-minded man, utterly incapable of anything mean, and I also am acting, I believe, on the highest motives, in keeping this disgraceful secret from him. He would marry me to-morrow if he knew it. But he shall not know it, for he would never have the same fearless pride as he has now if he knew it."

" If he marries you he shall know it, and all the world besides!"

" I think, Aunt," said Eleanor, quietly, " that it will be better for you not to break with me, and my devoted old Squire, James; I think it will be better for you!" and without waiting for Aunt Maria's reply she left the cabin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS was the last voyage of the good old Pelican under her present master ; what has become of her now I know not. I have not even heart to inquire whether or no she is still used as the yacht of the Secretary to the Shoals and Quicksands. Those who loved every timber, plank, and bolt in her, sail in other ships now. Our interest in them was the connecting link between us and the ship, and when they leave her, our interest in the ship must cease. She becomes, as far as this story is concerned, only a mass of wood and iron.

In life it is not so. Our affection for a ship one has once known well, is similar to our affection for a house one has once lived in, but intensified. Only last year, I went down to the East India Docks, and I came across the Orwell. It was like meeting an

old friend. There was a board which said that I must not go on board, and a steward, who tried to prevent me, until I said I knew her, upon which he yielded at once, and let me go over the old deck, from stem to stern. It is hard when on board a ship in the docks, standing so unmoveably still ; to realize that one has seen those steady tapering masts sweeping wildly across the blotched stars : or those sharp bows leaping madly up towards heaven in the agony of the storm : to recall the reeling, and rolling, and plunging, of the vast inert mass under one's feet, now resting so quietly from her labour.

Before the morning dawned the Pelican had threaded her way through the intricate channel between North Uist and Benbecula, and was steaming easily along under the cliffs of the latter island, and about nine, a preventive boat came off, and Mr. Elliot went on shore in her.

"The glass is dropping, sir," said the sailing master ; "and it is banking up to the west."

"Make haste, father," said Austin ; "don't be long. The glass is really falling very fast."

"Them as wants to know about dropping glasses," said a voice behind Austin, "should take my place (and Lord amighty knows they're welcome to it), and

then they'd know what it meant. Them huzzies of ours is always at it. Why I dreamp last night as I see the hull bilin of 'em come down the kitching stairs, one atop of the other, with no less than six dozen of pipe-stemmed wines, and all the cut custards."

"The young women do break a great deal of glass, I suppose, Mr. James," said the good-natured sailing master.

"Ah!" said James; "I believe you there. They gets a tittling one another on the stairs, and down they goes. And out she comes in her dirty old flannel dressing-gown, and gives 'em all warning over the banisters. She's been a trying falling down stairs herself, now; but I ain't hearn of anybody giving she warning."

This strong personal allusion to Aunt Maria forced Austin to stop a silent internal laughter, which, like Mr. Weller, he was trying to "come," and turn round.

"Well, James, how are you?" said he.

"Breaking up rapidly, sir; and thank you kindly," said James.

"I am sorry to hear that," said Austin, with perfect gravity.

The old man was going to make some cynical reply; but he looked round and saw they were alone: his whole manner changed at once.

"Master Austin, my dear," he said; "I see you and she on deck last night. Is it all as we should wish it?"

"Yes, James," said Austin.

"I thought so," said he. "Now you mind an old rogue, and you keep close to her. It would be a good thing for *she* (the old man so cordially hated Aunt Maria that he never named her if he could help it), if she could bully Miss Eleanor into marrying Captain Hertford, and then that the pair on 'em should have the bullying and bally-ragging of nine thousand a year. That would be a good thing, hey!"

"It will never happen," said Austin.

"You mind it don't," said the old man, and walked forward, leaving Austin musing.

The glass was dropping very fast, and it was clouding rapidly up, from the south-west. Lunch-time passed, and Mr. Elliot was still on shore: they began to get impatient. They could see him through their glasses, walking about the lighthouse, looking into everything, directing here, consulting there, as if time were not of the slightest value.

"By Jove, sir," said the sailing-master to Austin, "I wish we had ten miles more sea room. Boat-swain, run up second pennant and 3474."

It was done. Mr. Elliot was seen to notice it for an instant, and then turn away. He put up a cross staff in the middle of the lighthouse-keeper's potatoe garden, and then sent a preventive man, a quarter of a mile away, to the top of a hill, to get a line between the lighthouse and a sunk rock.

The sailing-master took a sharp turn on the deck, and muttered something. "Run out that gun and fire it."

Mr. Elliot did mind the gun. He came down to the beach with provoking deliberation, and at last got into the boat; before he reached the ship, two sharp squalls had passed singing through the rigging, and a third, fiercer than either of the others, swept over her as he scrambled on deck. There was scarce time to cast the boat off, before the storm was upon them in all its fury. They were relieved by seeing the boat cast up on shore, with her crew safe; then they had to think of themselves. The blast was so terrible and violent, that the yacht, although steaming ahead at full speed, was making

no way at all, and the rocks of Benbecula not half a mile to leeward.

"I am afraid I have been very remiss," said Mr. Elliot, as he walked away aft, and the sailing-master followed him.

"Dare you run for the lee of Monach?" said Mr. Elliot.

"We should be broadside on to Grimness in ten minutes, sir," said the sailing-master.

"Then God forgive me," said Mr. Elliot, and went to his cabin.

He had certainly staid too long. Even now at four o'clock in the afternoon they were steaming for bare life, and it seemed losing ground; the night was coming on, and the gale was increasing.

All that steam and iron could do, backed by a steady Scotch head to manage them, would be done; but the storm was too strong for them, and the rocks were close to leeward; their danger was very imminent. Mr. Elliot and the sailing-master knew it, and Austin guessed at it.

Eleanor, seeing Austin look so calm, was not frightened—or at least did not show it. She staid on deck with him through all the furious turmoil. They were wrapped in the same plaid; and, in spite

of the rush and boom of the seas, and the scream of the cordage, each could hear every word spoken by the other as plain as though they were walking together in a garden on a summer afternoon.

At last Eleanor went down, not long after dark. She looked into her aunt's cabin. That good lady was sleeping quietly, unconscious of all danger; and so Eleanor went to her own cabin and lay down.

She had looked into the main cabin, and seen Mr. Elliot busy with his papers and charts. She was quite reassured, and slept peacefully. But Mr. Elliot was not busy with his papers—far from it. He was quite enough of a sailor to know their extreme danger. When Eleanor passed into her cabin, he was leaning his head on his hands, and anxiously musing. Presently the sailing-master came into the cabin and spoke to him.

"She is actually making leeway at times, sir," said he. "As the sea gets up she will make more. The danger is very extreme, sir."

"And no anchorage?" said Mr. Elliot. "If we could only bite ground, we might, by steaming at anchor, weather it."

"We are in blue water, sir," said the sailing-

master. "If there is no change it will be all over in an hour."

"And all my fault," said Mr. Elliot.

"Nonsense, sir. You were detained ashore by duty."

"Well, let us say so," the old man replied. "It will be all over in an hour?"

"Yes, sir, thereabouts," said the sailing-master.

When he was gone, the old man lay down his head and prayed. He prayed for his son Austin; that such a noble young life should not be cut off untimely, through his own carelessness. If he had seen a little further into the future, perhaps he might have prayed that it might all be over now, and that Austin and he might sleep together under the wild fretting waves of the Atlantic, and be spared the evil to come.

The brave little ship was leaping madly, and creaking in every timber; and underneath him where he sat the screw was spinning and clanking and buffeting the wild waters: sometimes coming half out of water, with an angry jerking hiss; and then throbbing bravely and diligently at its work ten feet below the surface. It was a mad fight between winds and waves on the one hand, and iron and

steam on the other, and he, and all dear to him, were the prize.

The noise was so great that he could hear no one approach him. A hand was laid on his arm, and he started and looked up. Then he stood up altogether, and looked with astonishment at the figure by his side.

It was Aunt Maria. But she did not look as he had ever seen her look before. She wore the dirty flannel dressing-gown which that impudent old fellow James had mentioned, but on her head was a brilliantly gay cap, full of flowers, and in her hand she clutched an ivory fan, which she held upside down. But, startling as her dress was, it was her face that startled Mr. Elliot most. Her thick bushy eyebrows almost concealed her deep-sunk small eyes — and those eyes did not appear very steady ; — and her complexion, usually such a deep red, was now a dull sickly yellow.

Mr. Elliot had been in many lunatic asylums in his life, but neither he, nor any other man, ever went into one yet without seeing a middle-aged lady there, who was uncommonly like Aunt Maria, as she stood before him this night in his cabin.

He rose, in his alarm, and looked keenly at her,

trying to catch her eye. Hers would not meet his, but she broke silence first, in a hoarse unequal voice.

"I heard every word that your sailing-master said to you just now. I know that in an hour we shall all be—all be drowned."

"I hope not," said Mr. Elliot politely. "The ship is in danger of going ashore, certainly, but there is every chance for us, Miss Hilton."

"Nonsense!" said she, catching his eyes, and dropping hers again at once. "I know that the end of us all is near. I curse the day when you deluded me into this voyage, that your scatterbrained son might make love to my niece, and have her money. Do you know what you have done?"

"No," said Mr. Elliot, looking steadily at her.

"I will whisper to you." And she whispered to him, and his face grew a little graver as she spoke.

"Now what do you say? If by any chance we were to be saved, would you break off the match?"

"No," said Mr. Elliot. "In the first place, it don't affect the property. I am an executor, and I know that."

"I thought you had set your heart on your son's public career?"

"So I have."

"It will be a noble one with that round his neck."

"He and I may have our own opinion about that. Why, if you believe that we are all to be drowned in an hour, do you tell me this?"

"Because I hate you;—because I always hated you!"

"Always?" said Mr. Elliot.

"No," she said, fiercely, "I loved you once. How dare you remind me of it? I showed it, and that was my fault. I always hated you, and Jenkinson, since that day when I heard you laughing at me. How dare you! I came to tell you this because I believe that you have not an hour to live, and that I thought it would annoy you."

"May God forgive you as I do, Maria," said the old man.

She turned to go.

"Won't you say 'good-bye,' Maria, for old times' sake?" said Mr. Elliot.

Aunt Maria would not go so far as that, but she came half way. She burst into a wild wail; she broke her fan into a hundred pieces, said that she was a miserable, ugly, mad old woman, who had never had justice done her by those she had loved, and so

went weeping and wringing her hands, back to her cabin.

"Poor thing!" said good old Mr. Elliot. "I wish I could get her out of Hertford's clutches. Small chance of that! I must tell Austin all this some day, that is clear, but not yet. His love is a little too young to stand it yet; I shall wait till she has become a necessity to him. By-the-bye, I forgot we are all going to the bottom; we shall be ashore on Benbecula in half an hour."

But when Mr. Elliot said this it was nearly twelve o'clock at night, and the yacht, so far from tailing on to the coast of Benbecula, was driving (that is supposing her to go clear of the stage of Broad-harran, Lion's-head, and Eagle-island, which, as every schoolboy knows, are the furthest projections of the county Mayo, in Ireland, to the west)—was driving, I say, straight towards that part of the Atlantic, where I am inclined to place the still undiscovered island of St. Borondon: in spite of the impudent lies of Marco Verde, before the worthy Pedro Ortez de Funez, inquisitor of the Grand Canary; who ought to have fried him in a frying-pan, for insulting the Holy Office with his coeks and bulls. And how it came that the good Pelican had turned her tail SW. by S.,

I will tell you in a few words, before we bid her good-bye for ever.

Austin, finding the deck untenable, for the driving spray, bethought him of the engine-room, and he went down there. Old Murray, the engineer, was standing steadfast before his gleaming cranks and leaping pistons ; and he saw that the engine was being worked at a speed he had never seen before.

The engineer shook his head without turning round. "If aught gives, Master Austin ! "

"Is there any danger ? "

"She'll just hold her own if naught gives."

"I suspect our lives are in good hands, old friend," said Austin, "and I know no one to whom I would sooner trust mine."

The old man looked lovingly on Austin, and Austin stood beside him some time. Suddenly the voice of the master was heard inquiring for Mr. Austin.

Some one said he was in the engine-room.

"Tell him to come quick. Say I have something to show him."

Austin dashed out of the engine-room, and up the only open companion-ladder. As he got on deck, the press of wind nearly suffocated him, but the ship

was steady. There was very little sea, the wind had beaten it down. Above, all was black as ink, but the sea around them was a wild mist of white foam. The master shouted in his ear—

“Look a-head and aloft!”

He did so. A-head of the ship’s bows, high aloft, there was a brighter patch in the inky sky, a patch of blue, in which were three or four stars, which seemed to reel, and dip, and rise again, as he staggered on the slippery deck; and across this patch, wreaths and wisps of storm-cloud were flying quick as lightning; but, awful as it seemed to Austin, these wreaths of cloud were not going *with* the wind, but from right to left, nearly dead against it.

“Good Lord!” he said, “why the clouds are flying against the wind!”

“It is a new trick they have got then,” said the master; “wait and watch, Master Austin, you won’t see the like again out of the China seas. This is what *I* call a typhoon. I reckon they have another name for it hereabouts. Watch what happens, sir.”

The patch of blue sky approached them, though not very fast, and as it approached them, grew larger. At last it was over head, and as they became aware of it, they became aware of these things

also. That it was a great funnel into the sky, through a circular whirlwind of storm-cloud ; and that the moment they were under it, the ship was becalmed amidst a heavy sea, which slopped about, here and there, in every direction.

They were actually becalmed, while all around they could hear the tempest howling and raving. The ship began to make splendid headway now, with her head S. W.

But in twenty minutes, the engines were ordered to go at half speed, and her head was put N.E. straight for the island which they had dreaded. Ten minutes after, the storm struck them from that very quarter, with increased fury, and the good Pelican, saved, with her engines going quarter speed, was drifting slowly and safely out into the Atlantic.

And in the morning, when the storm was past, she was leaping and bounding southward, over the bright blue waves, with a thousand happy sea-birds skimming and diving around her. And Austin and Eleanor were on deck together, already forgetful of the hideous night which had passed.

And now we must bid good-bye to the Pelican, and to Murray, the engineer, and the sailing master, for our way lies in a different direction. Austin was

about to part from these friends of his youth, these friends who had pampered and petted him, and to start in the world for himself. With what success, we shall see.

A month after his return to London he was on his way to make the tour of the East, with Lord Charles Barty. At Alexandria he picked up a letter, which told him that his father was dangerously ill. He turned homeward, and his faithful friend came with him. At Malta, he heard that his noble old father was dead. His burst of grief was wild and child-like, but his good friend, Lord Charles Barty, stayed him and comforted him, and took him home gently and kindly, and Austin rewarded him for it, one fine morning, as we shall see. He got home only to find the funeral sometime over, and to take possession of his property.

And now we must skip a few months, and pick up our story again at the end of them. These last events took place in the Spring of 1845. We shall take it up again in the beginning of 1846.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE year 1846 had begun, Parliament had met, and the murder was out. Everybody had been perfectly certain of it, ever since Lord Stanley's refusal to join the new ministry; but everybody now said, that they wouldn't have believed it. After Sir Robert had got up, immediately after the seconding of the address, and, in less than twenty minutes announced, that the failure of the potatoes had necessitated his resignation, and that his ideas on the subject of protection had undergone a considerable change; some people, by far the larger number, were struck with profound admiration, some were violently angry, some were intensely amused, and all very much excited.

A new political star had arisen, though as yet

it was very near the horizon, and its orbit was unascertained. Some time before Parliament met, the Daily Intelligencer, a paper which prides itself on the earliness of its political intelligence, announced that "they were informed," that the address would be moved, in the Commons, by the newly elected member for Granitebridge. But Sir Robert Peel knew better than that. The address was, on that occasion, committed to the older and wiser head of Lord Francis Egerton.

The newly elected member for Granitebridge was no other a person than Lord Charles Barty. A vacaney for that borough having occurred by the death of old Sir Pitchcroft Cockpole, the borough had been contested by Lord Charles and Captain Blockstrop. The gallant Captain was fearfully beaten, to his own great surprise.

The Captain had argued in this way. That Lord Charles, though coming of a Whig house, must, being a duke's son, be at heart a Tory. That was Captain Blockstrop's unalterable opinion. So he issued a rather liberal address, as *he* thought; expecting to be opposed by the very faintest and mildest form of gentle Whiggery. When he read Lord Charles Barty's address, Austin says that his hair stood

on end, and emitted electrical brushes, and his whiskers crackled like a cat's back.

Lord Charles's address was the most atrocious and revolutionary document which had appeared for many years. The Captain had said, "that, should it appear that the supply of food was likely to be seriously diminished by the failure of the potato crop, he for one would listen patiently to any arguments which might be adduced in favour of a temporary (mark him, a temporary) suspension of the duties," for many of the population of Granitebridge were bucolic and Protectionists. Lord Charles Barty had disposed of this question, and conciliated the Protectionists by saying, "that the Corn Laws were a festering ulcer on the body politic, and that every hour they were permitted to remain, was another hour of humiliation and disgrace to the country." The Captain thought that, at some future time, a slight enlargement and redistribution of the suffrage might possibly be advisable. Lord Charles Barty proposed manhood suffrage and the ballot, to be taken immediately, as *his* specific for the potato rot, and every other disease. The Captain, who seemed really to have taken some pains to inform himself of facts, thought that, in case of a suspension or abolition of the

corn duties; some relief should be granted to the agricultural interest; say in a consolidation of highway districts, or in an alteration in the law of settlement. But Lord Charles either knew nothing (which is most probable) or cared nothing, about highway rates, or the return of worn-out paupers from rich manufacturing towns, to impoverished rural districts. He finished his address by telling the Protectionist constituency of Granitebridge, that, if the agricultural interest could not take care of itself, it was no one else's business to take care of them.

But he was elected by 258 against 164, for these reasons.

In the first place, the good and gallant Captain, had made a most awful and Jack-a-shore sort of blunder. His strong point, the point on which he dwelt most, was that of Admiralty reform. Now it so happens, that Granitebridge is not more (as the crow flies) than one hundred miles from the great arsenal of Plymouth; and all the trim stone villas about the town, have been built out of the proceeds of filchings of copper, and nails, and rope's ends, from the dockyard there. The inhabitants of those cottages and villas, had each of them, at

that very time, three or four relations down in Plymouth, in the dockyards there, filching away their hardest, at the copper and rope's ends, that they also might retire, and build villas like their relations. Now, you know, this was not the sort of constituency, to which to broach Admiralty reform. The Captain argued that, being so near Plymouth, they must be familiar with, and interested in, dock-yard mismanagement. This was eminently true, but not in the sense the Captain meant.

Another point in Lord Charles Barty's favour was, that his name was Barty. The mighty sheets of deep red cornland, which stretched west from the town, lying in pleasant slopes towards the south, were all his father's, as far as the eye could reach. The town itself, and the land about it, belonged to Sir Pitchcroft Cockpole. They always had a Cockpole, or a Barty for one of their members. They knew them, and could trust them: and these Bartys too; they were all wild young hawks at first (except the blind Lord Edward), but they always turned out steady, devoted, useful public servants in the end. “I'm a Protectionist,” said one old farmer on the hustings, “but I'd sooner have Lord Charles and Free-trade, than e'er a one else, with Protection.”

Though he is a *owdaicious* young Turk, surely—drat 'un!"

And a third reason for Lord Charles' return is this: when he and his friend Mr. Elliot came down canvassing, there was no resisting them. They were such a handsome, noble, merry pair of fellows, that they took the warm Devon hearts by storm. Lord Charles went about uttering the most atrocious revolutionary sentiments, in an airy, agreeable sort of way, and Austin went with him, and laughed at him.

One great event of the campaign, was the attack on old Mr. Pilgrim, the quaker, in the upper Croft. It will illustrate their very free and easy sort of tactics.

On the very first day of their arrival, as Charles Barty, Austin, and the attorney were sitting together after dinner: Brentmore pointed him out as an important and influential man—a man who, if the Captain ran them close, might make or mar the whole business.

"You must go to him to-morrow morning, my lord."

"I'll be hanged if I do. I shall say something terrible, and set him against me. I cannot converse with a quaker—I never tried."

" You will have to try," said the attorney.

" Wouldn't it be better fun," said Lord Charles, " seeing he is such an influential man ; for me to send a letter to him, saying that I consider him a broad-brimmed old idiot, and that I'll tweak his stupid nose for twopence. There would be some fun in winning the election after that."

" There would, indeed, my lord. You must go to him to-morrow. When the Tory man came down, before the breath was out of Sir Pitchcroft's body, to see how the land lay, he just called on Mr. Pilgrim, and from what he heard there, went away again."

" Who was the gentleman—who was the base Tory who dared to show his face at Granitebridge ? "

" A certain Captain Hertford," said the attorney.

Lord Charles and Austin became attentive.

" He has done a good deal of dirty electioneering work in his time, and now he is looking out for a seat for himself. He is engaged to be married to Miss Hilton, a great heiress, I believe."

" Will you be kind enough to tell him, the next time you see him," said Austin, " that he is a confounded liar, and that I told you to say so."

" No, Mr. Elliot. A man of my figure, sir, as

broad as he is long, and only ten stone, after all, can't do it, sir. It would be no use doing it, and putting it in the bill. No one is rich enough to pay me for the consequences of telling that gallant captain that he is a confounded liar. Suppose, sir, that *you* were to tell him so, and to say that *I* told you."

" You mark my words, I will," said Austin—" the abominable villain ! "

" I understand," said the attorney, " that the young lady is quite under the influence of her aunt, and—by-the-bye, we must look over the lists, gentlemen," he added, quickly, for Lord Charles, after three or four attempts, had managed to give him a violent " drive " on the shins under the table.

Just outside the town at Granite-bridge, there is a long lime avenue by the river side. Here, at ten o'clock that night, Lord Charles Barty and Austin walked up and down, smoking their cigars.

The winter's moon was overhead above the leafless trees ; and far up to the north, in the moor, they could hear the river, here so calm, chafing among his granite boulders.

" Austin, old fellow," said Lord Charles, " when are you going to get married ? "

"I wish I knew," said Austin.

"There is no cloud between you and Eleanor, is there?" said he.

"Not one vestige," said Austin. "There was a time, Charles, when I was not in love with that woman; but there never was a time when I did not love her."

"And your love for her grows stronger?" said he.

"Day by day, and hour by hour," said Austin.
"But she—does she love me as I love her?"

"Ten thousand times better, Austin. I will go bail for that."

"Then why does she put me off?"

"I do not know. Because, I take it, she is in the hands of her aunt. You should make a bold push of some kind. Look at her position, my dear old friend—just look at her position. God help her if anything happens to you!"

"Her position is not good, certainly," said Austin, pensively.

"It is simply horrible! Here is a young lady—a *lady*, mind—with an enormous fortune, *very* handsome, in her way; clever and charming beyond conception, without a soul to speak to in her own rank in life. My blind brother, and you and I, are the

only friends she has in the world. She is utterly debarred from all society."

" You see," said Austin, " her father did some queer things in his time, and so no one takes her up."

" The world is very cruel, Austin, but it is not so cruel as all that. The reason that no one goes near her is, that no one will have anything to do with her aunt."

" I suppose that is it," said Austin ; " and she is getting worse and worse."

" Does she drink ?" said Lord Charles.

" I fancy so. She is always terribly excited."

" Did you hear of her kicking up a row in church, last Sunday ?"

" No," said Austin. " Was Eleanor with her ?"

" Oh, no ; she and Edward were philandering at St. Paul's, bless the two sweet Puseyites. Austin, why are you not jealous of Edward ?"

" And thereby deprive Eleanor of the only happy hours of her life. Why, if it were not for your brother, and his sitting to play her piano, and his taking her about to the churches and cathedrals on a week-day, she'd go mad. Jealous of your brother ! I watched them one day last week, creeping in under

the shadow of the abbey wall. She was leading him, for there was some anthem to be sung, which they had heard of, and had gone posting off across the park to hear. It was Advent time, you know; and there are fine anthems sung then, about Christ's coming, and that sort of thing. And I followed them in, and, when the organ had done snarling and booming, and the voices began, I watched them, and there they sat, with their hands folded before them, like two stone angels. Your brother has a beautiful face of his own, blind as he is. Somewhat too much of this. One is talking nonsense, or near it. One always does, if one walks up and down at midnight, with the friend of one's heart."

" May the deuce have a man who don't," said Lord Charles. " That brother of mine has a noble face."

" Was Lord Edward always blind ? "

" Always. He began to sing when he was five years old."

" He never sings now."

" No, he lost his voice at fourteen. Before that, he used to go wandering about the house, singing some ballad, or hymn, which had taken his fancy, to some tune of his own choosing, in a strange, shivering, silvery voice. Once, I remember George

and I were in the school-room, kicking up a row with our sisters, and plaguing Miss Myrtle: and we heard him come singing along the gallery, and we all grew silent and listened. And we heard him feel his way to the door, singing all the time. And he was singing “Lord Ullin’s Daughter.” And he threw the door open, while we all sat silent; and you never saw a stranger sight. He thought no one was there (for we were all very silent), and went on singing; and his blind face was flushed with passion:

‘ And still, as wilder grew the storm,
 And, as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armèd men,
 Their footsteps sounded nearer.’

“Yes, he is a fine fellow. Let us, however, return to what we were talking about.”

“That includes a great many things,” said Austin. “For instance: about Aunt Maria making a fracas in church.”

“Oh, aye, she did. My people were at St. Peter’s, and she came in, and the pew-opener had put some one in her pew. And she kicked up a row, by Jove, and spoke out loud. She was either mad or drunk.

“Was there any disturbance?”

"Why, no. She recovered herself when every one looked round. But no one minded their prayers much. Well, I don't want to distress you, old fellow, but you had better know the truth. It was a *very* ugly business. She utterly lost command of herself. People were talking of it in London, and said she was drunk."

"What the deuce am I to do?" said Austin impatiently.

"Make Eleanor appoint a day for marrying you. Don't be put off any longer."

"There's where it is," said Austin. "She *has* appointed a day. She has appointed a day in next April twelvemonths."

"Next April twelvemonths?"

"Aye," said Austin, "and stuck to it."

"That looks like reading the bill this day six months," said Lord Charles.

"No," said Austin, "she don't mean that. She is in her aunt's hands."

"She must be very weak," said Lord Charles.

"No!" said Austin. "She loves me, as *you* know. There is some scandal in the house, most likely about her brother, who is dead, who robbed you at Eton. Aunt Maria knows something, and

whips her in. What shall I do with that black-hearted villain, Hertford?"

"Leave him alone. Give him rope enough to hang himself withal. If she allows her aunt to bully her into marrying him, you are well rid of her. By giving him rope, you may bowl out Aunt Maria."

"You are right. Meanwhile, your brother Edward is there continually; and she, with her true toad-eating instinct, allows him to come unchallenged, when my appearance would only make a scene for poor Eleanor, after I was gone. Lord Edward is stone-blind; but not, as I have heard, deaf. On some occasions, Aunt Maria has behaved as though she considered that the loss of one sense involved the loss of all. I say, Barty!"

"Well, old fellow."

"About Hertford. I know that his scheme is to marry Eleanor if he can. The end will be, that he will try to get rid of me by forcing me to go out with him."

"Damn duelling!" said Lord Charles, suddenly.

"So say I," said Austin; "but that is his game."

Lord Charles chucked his cigar into the road and walked silent for a few minutes; at the end he said,

"Dear old fellow! will you pay attention to me? That *is* his game; I know it, Edward knows it. He will, in case of his finding himself outwitted, do that; he is a dead shot, he will force you out and kill you, if it becomes worth his while—you must be very careful and gentle with him."

"I have been, Charles," said Austin. "I know what you say is true, and I have been very careful."

"Aye, but it has not been worth his while yet. There is a strong talk about enforcing the law against duelling. *He* knows that. It will be his last resource. If he could get her, and her aunt safe abroad, he would shoot you to-morrow."

The interview with Mr. Pilgrim the quaker was eminently successful. It took place next morning at eleven, in this wise :—

Lord Charles was perfectly *snapping* to Austin as they walked towards the house; and Austin laughed at his woe-begone look, till he assaulted him in a by-place where no one was looking. When they got to the quaker's house they were shown into a cool parlour, to await the great man. Austin took down books from the shelves, poked the fire, and dropped the poker, made jokes, laughed loudly at them, and generally misbehaved himself. At last he

came round to the cellaret, and, seeing it was unlocked, prompted by a noble curiosity, he raised the lid. At this moment a heavy footfall was heard outside the door, and Austin dropped the lid with a terrible slam, just as the quaker entered the room.

He was a noble-looking old man, and he went straight up to Austin, with a sweet smile—

“Lord Charles Barty, I believe,” said he.

Austin, as red as fire, pointed to the real man; and the candidate, looking as red as Austin, said,

“I am Lord Charles Barty, Mr. Pilgrim.”

“And this gentleman,” said the quaker, sweetly, “who has done me the honour to look into my poor cellaret?”

“That’s Mr. Austin Elliot,” said Lord Charles, “and confound him, he is always up to some of his fool’s tricks in the wrong place. But he is mad, you know—as mad as a hatter. No one can manage him but me. I wouldn’t have allowed him to take anything; I don’t think he meant to. He has a monomania for looking into people’s cellarets. All his family had. His—his—his grandmother died of it; and by Jove, sir, it’s hurrying him to his grave!”

“Indeed!” said Mr. Pilgrim, with his mouth twitching at the corners.

"Oh, yes," said Lord Charles ; "but that don't matter. I say, Mr. Pilgrim, I wish you'd vote for me, and get the other people you can manage, to vote for me. I assure you that I will make a good, diligent member. All I care for is to get into the House and find my place in the world. It may seem a conceited thing to say, but I think I shall make you a better member than Captain Blockstrop, though he is a gentleman, and a good fellow. I was going to make you a speech, but that fellow Elliot has put it out of my head. Perhaps it is all for the best. If I remember right, there was a lie or two in the speech I was going to make you. Now I have blurted out the whole truth."

The quaker looked on him with a smile.

"I have two conditions, my lord."

Lord Charles recovered himself and looked keenly at him.

"Let me hear them," he said, "just to see if they tally with my own foregone conclusions. But mind, I don't change one iota of my programme, at your or any other man's bidding."

"There spoke a real obstinate Party," said the quaker. "My conditions are these—You are pledged

to sweep the corn-laws into the dust-bin of the past once and for ever. Do I understand that?"

" You may certainly understand that."

" And you and Mr. Elliot are pledged to dine with me the day after to-morrow, and see what is in the cellaret?"

" I am pledged to that also."

" Then all shall go well. My lord, I know you and your worth, and I know Mr. Elliot and his worth also, though he has peeped into my cellaret. I wish you a good morning, my lord. I have done one good service for you already. I sent that—that military officer, Will Hertford out of the borough pretty quick. There is a great advantage in lending money at times; you *can* get rid of a man. My old acquaintance George Hilton used to say that. Ah! poor fellow. Sad for him to die and leave his poor little girl all alone in this wicked world. Good morning!"

So Barty was returned by a noble majority, and Blockstrop once more went down into the sea in his ship, and put forth into the deep, taking his naval reforms with him; and so the Admiralty was left in peace.

CHAPTER XX.

ELEANOR lived at the house her father had occupied for many years, in Wilton Crescent. It was not a large house, and her household was small. She saw actually no society. Sometimes the monotony of her life was broken by the visit of an old schoolmate, but they never stayed long, nor did she press them. Hers was not a house for bright young girls to stay in. She felt it. She knew it. There was something so indefinitely coarse, something so beyond and beside, all gentle domestic love, in her aunt, that she never pressed those girls to stay, and never of her own will, invited them.

She was a strange little being. She had to dree her weary weird, and she did so, with a depth of love, courage, self-sacrifice, and shrewdness, which you will appreciate when you know all. The fairy

which had given her such boundless wealth, had given her counter-balancing gifts which made that wealth worse than worthless. She would gladly have given it all away, on certain conditions.

There was one reason why she clung to this wealth. There was one reason why she still rejoiced that, disgrace her as they might, that wealth was still her own. It would be Austin's. If he would only wait and trust her through everything, it would all be his. If he would only wait and trust her.

She was sitting at her piano. She was alone in her drawing-room, and the light of the level winter's sun was on her face. If there was, at ordinary times, a fault in that face, it was, that the under lip and chin were somewhat too short, and the mouth rather too closely set. That fault, if it were a fault, was not perceptible just now, for she was leaning over the keys, with her fingers upon them, studying the score of the music before her. Every now and then she would try it, and, each time she did so, the music grew towards perfection, until at last it rolled away triumphant and majestic. It was an old Huguenot hymn-tune, which she had found in her dead mother's portfolio.

The door opened. Her mouth grew close set

again in an instant. She turned round and confronted her aunt.

Aunt Maria looked very flushed and odd. Eleanor said to herself, "she has been drinking." She sat down before the fire-place, and, after a pause, said, peevishly—

"Well, child."

"Well, aunt dear."

"Well, aunt dear!" she repeated sharply. "Eleanor, may God save you from the bitterness of having a sulky, obstinate niece, when you are got old like me! A niece who loves to lacerate a poor old woman's feelings, by making her ask and cross-question before she can get one word of information. There, God forgive you, after all I have done for you. Don't you know that to-day is the fifteenth, you wicked girl?"

"Alas, I know it well."

"Have you been out this morning?" said Aunt Maria.

"Of course I have," said Eleanor, in a low voice.

"Well."

"I have nothing to tell you. Captain Hertford went with me."

"Dear man!" said Aunt Maria. "Dear, blessed,

sainted man ! And, oh, he loves the very ground you walk on."

" I am sorry he should so far waste his love," said Eleanor. " I am, I am sorry to say, wicked enough to have the very strongest personal dislike for him. In this unhappy business, however, he seems to have behaved kindly and well. I do not judge his motives, I only judge his actions, aunt. He has behaved kindly and delicately towards me, and I will try to reward him."

" Ah !" said Aunt Maria, " if you would—

" Now aunt, neither you nor he can possibly be silly enough to suppose that I shall marry him. When I talk of rewarding him, I mean this. He is gone to stand on the Tory interest at Glenport. Before he went, I told him that, if he would, as soon as he had ascertained the cost of his election, have an interview with my man of business, he would probably find those expenses provided for."

" Why, you fool," said Aunt Maria, " that is giving the man two or three thousand pounds without an equivalent."

" Well he has a heart somewhere, I suppose," said Eleanor, " or, supposing he hasn't, he is a gentleman;

and, having taken his price to leave me alone, will do so."

"I tell you he loves you, you fool. I tell you that he loves the ground you walk on. He is a man; he is worth fifty coxcombs. You—"

"Don't scold, aunt. If he does love me so deeply, I must say he has taken the price of his election-expenses rather coolly. Don't begin to scold. I am not afraid of your scolding now. Austin will be with me to-day."

"I wish he was dead," said aunt Maria. "I wish Charles Barty was dead; I wish Edward Barty was dead."

"When they are dead, or when they have deserted me, aunt, you may take me and do what you will with me. God knows they are the only friends I have on this earth. All houses are shut to me, aunt. You know that. But I have a heaven that you don't know about. When Austin comes in and talks to me in his sweet gentle voice; or when Charles Barty comes branking in with his merry nonsense, I am in a different world to the one you know of, aunt; and when blind noble Edward and I are at our music together—then, then, aunt, ah! where are Captain

Hertford and all the misery then?—miles, miles below our feet, aunt!"

" You go rambling about to church, with that blind fiddling idiot, in a way which in my time no girl would have dared to do. People will talk of it. Have you no sense of what is correct? People will talk about you as sure as you are born."

" Very few people are likely to talk about you and I, aunt," said Eleanor. " We have learned that much, in spite of our wealth. If we keep quiet, we are at present insignificant."

Whereupon aunt Maria began to scold, rambling on from misstatement to misstatement, until she had no new misstatement to make, and then beginning *da capo* with the original grievance. And that is the true art of scolding in all countries, I believe.

CHAPTER XXI.

THERE is a place I know, which is unlike any other place I have ever been in. It is only the transept of a cathedral, and yet for some reason it is different to all other transepts. I cannot tell you why, but so it is. Possibly the reason is, because I have been more familiar with it than with any other, and because I love it far better than any other. The place I speak of is Poet's Corner.

On a certain day Austin Elliot was in Poet's Corner, sitting upon Chaucer's tomb. Those who walked up and down in the transept only noticed that a very handsome and well-dressed young man, with appearance of extreme youth, was sitting upon Chaucer's tomb. No one knew the profoundly deep schemes, which were revolving within that youth's head, or under that youth's curls.

Austin had taken to heart what Lord Charles had said to him at Granitebridge, and, after a long pause, had acted on it. The mere fact that he had taken time to deliberate, instead of rushing off headlong and doing just what his friend had suggested, proved to him most satisfactorily that he was getting old, sagacious, knowing—nay, even sly. He had developed a scheme by which every possible obstacle to the happiness of all parties was to be removed. He had matured it, and now he was going to broach it. It required the consent of four or five people, who were about as likely to agree as his Holiness the Pope and his Majesty the King of Italy; but still his plan was a good one, and the idea of failure was not to be thought of.

Things were very unsatisfactory. Eleanor was engaged to him. He and she loved and trusted one another beyond the way of ordinary lovers. There had never been a shade of anger or jealousy between them for one second. He was his own master. She was of age. And yet things were most unsatisfactory.

The fact was that, as we have heard before, Eleanor refused to be married before the next spring—a whole twelvemonth. And meanwhile she was

living, as it were, under the protection of her aunt—an awful woman, who looked red and wild—who had made a disturbance in church—who knew no one—whose very appearance was keeping people in mind of the scandals against Eleanor's father, which they would have laughed at, and forgotten, long ago, if they had not been reminded of them by the appearance of this terrible woman in the Park, in Eleanor's own carriage, every day.

And again, Captain Hertford was a man of very odd character, and he was continually in aunt Maria's company. Captain Hertford was known to be a desperate, though successful, gambler, and a man of such courage and skill in the noble art of duelling, that he could still hold his head up among the very best in the land. Every one knew all sorts of things about him; but any man who would have refused to go out with the gallant Captain would probably have had to withdraw his name from his Clubs. Captain Hertford was, in short, a notorious blackguard—a weed which can only grow under the infernal, devil-invented system of *Duello*; and yet a man with whom it was necessary to be on good terms, and a Member of Parliament. He sat for a small port in D—shire. The people there had rather wanted a Tory Member.

They had very much wanted their railway. Captain Hertford had undertaken their railway, and everything else they had asked, had spent a moiety of Eleanor's two thousand pounds, and got in handsomely.

Such were the two persons who seemed to use Eleanor's house as their own home. Austin's brilliant plan was, to marry Eleanor, and buy these two people off—to bribe them to leave her alone.

It was a good plan. Eleanor had behaved with the most consummate discretion. She had never appeared in public with her aunt; she had only a few old schoolfellows for her friends; and, as for going out to any sort of party, in any rank in life, she never dreamed of such a thing. Every one (for people were getting interested in her strange espiègle style of beauty, her immense wealth, her curious menage, and also her excessive modesty and good taste)—every one knew of her engagement to that young Elliot, and thought him lucky. Every one knew that she saw nobody except Austin and his two friends, Lord Edward and Lord Charles Barty; and after every one had seen the mother of these two young noblemen wait at the door of St. Paul's (Knightsbridge) until the curious little being came

out, dressed in quiet grey silk, with a big diamond clasp to her cloak, and had seen the duchess introduce herself, and speak kindly to her ; after this every one knew that she was a meritorious young lady ; and they were right, for the duchess was never wrong. It was perfectly evident to every one after this that there nothing stood between Eleanor and entire recognition, save the elimination of Aunt Maria and Captain Hertford.

A curious thing was, that Eleanor never appeared in public, except to go to church. On Sunday morning she was always at her place at St. Paul's (Knightsbridge) ; but in the afternoon, and every day through the week, she went anywhere and everywhere—the Abbey—Margaret Street—nay, between ourselves, Moorfields and Gordon Square. She always walked. If no one else was with her, she took old James ; but this was seldom. Sometimes Austin would go with her ; but generally her companion was blind Lord Edward Barty. They used to walk very fast, for they were a very strange-looking couple, and people used to stare at them. They never went anywhere where they had to make many crossings, for Eleanor was nervous about taking him over them. For this reason the Abbey was their favourite week-

day resort, because the only difficult crossing is at the top of Grosvenor Place: after this you are in the Parks, and all is plain sailing.

Lord Edward knew every organist in London, and always knew what music there would be. He used to come to Eleanor's house, and they two would try to render it on the piano until it was time to start, and then they would go down to the Abbey and hear their crude attempt rendered for them by the master's hand, with every magnificent accompaniment which their hearts could desire.

On this day Austin had called at Eleanor's house, and had learned that she was gone to the Abbey, but alone. This determined him, instead of calling again, to follow her there and walk home with her; and so we find him sitting on Chaucer's tomb, and watching for her.

The place was very quiet, for very few people were sauntering about and looking at the monuments: but presently the organ snarled out its last magnificent dismissal, and two or three hundred feet came whispering across the pavement from the choir.

Eleanor was nearly the last. The little grey ghostly figure came stealing on from light to darkness so gently that her footfall could not be heard

amongst the others, the little gloved hands were hanging at her side, her face was very calm and peaceful, and her eyes were set straight on Rare Ben Jonson, until she came opposite Chaucer's tomb, and she turned to glance on it as usual; and then her face lit up with joy, for Austin was sitting there, defiant of vergers, and laughing at her.

They were together in one instant, and her hand was on his arm, for a minute they were both too happy to say one word.

"My darling bird," whispered Austin—for they were in a sacred edifice—"were you going to walk home alone in the dusk?"

"Old James is with me, Austy dear," said she. "When Lord Edward is not with me, I always bring him."

"He is not here now," said Austin. "I wonder if he has gone to sleep. What a lark if he should be locked in."

At this moment a terrible disturbance was heard in the choir.

"Oh, Austin, whatever shall we do?" said Eleanor.

"Stay here, my love," said Austin; and he ran back.

A verger was just locking the gate in the screen, and seemed inclined to dispute passage; but Austin pushed past him: and on entering saw a sight which turned him to stone. Old James had got hold of a verger by the hair, had dragged him down across a bench, and was beating him about the back of the head with Eleanor's best prayer-book. On benches around stood angelic, white-robed choristers in groups, who were saying; as loud as they dared, "Crikey!"— "Brayvo, Rous!" and "Evans, if you *please*, gentlemen!" and making other low-lived remarks, which prevailed among the youth of our metropolis in the year of grace 1845-46.

Austin garotted and pinioned James, and turned him round. James, thinking Austin to be another verger, who had taken him in the rear, made savage bites at him over his shoulders, until Austin put him down in a safe place, upon which James remarked,—

"Well, you *are* a pretty sort of a friend! If you had let me a gone on till he got stupid, I'd have shifted my hand and got the clasp-side of the book on the back of his head. Lord! I'd have killed him in three minutes."

"It is better that he should be allowed to live, to

complete the measure of his crimes," said Austin, pretty well knowing, from long experience, that old James had a very strong case—that, if not actually in the right, he was uncommonly near it. It appeared, from the choristers, and from the good master, who had fled for assistance, and from the other vergers, that old James was in the right after all. He had fallen asleep, until he was awakened by the departure of the last of the congregation; he had then rapidly slid up to where Eleanor's gold-clasped prayer-book lay, to follow her with it as his duty was. The verger had got into the bencē before him, and thinking he was stealing the best prayer-book he could see, had very properly caught hold of old James by his coat, and on his resisting, had struck him. As Austin and the master pointed out, it was only a case for mutual apologies, and a sovereign, given by Austin to the conscientious verger, made matters infinitely comfortable, and so he walked the old man off triumphant.

Old James had burst his braces in the *melée*, and insisted on stopping to mend them with a knife and some string, before he rejoined Eleanor.

Austin took this occasion to ask, "Why did you go to sleep in church, James? Just think what it

would have been for Miss Eleanor if I had not been here."

"Ah! lucky you was. Uncommon seldom *you* comes to church a week-days, God forgive you! Why don't you take her to church a week-days, like Lord Edward do, blind though he is? I'm not one of they, as holds there's any harm in coming to church a week-days."

"Neither am I," said Austin.

"Then why don't 'ee?" said the old man. "Lord Edward, he is a gentleman; he'd be a gentleman if he were led down Piccadilly by a brown, curly-tailed mongrel dog, and a wicker basket in his mouth, for the boys to put bits of backer pipe and oyster-shells into it. Aye, he would, although, mind you, I'm not one of they as holds with blind folks in generally —they're mortal sly."

"But why did you go to sleep in church?" said Austin.

"Because I had too much to drink in the morning," snapped the old man, who was undeniably sober now. "You'd have done the same if you had had they wardens to deal with all the morning. 'What's your name, and what do you want?' says one, as has drunk with me fifty times. 'Seggetary State's order,'

I says, ‘and none of your nonsense ; Lamb and Flag at half-past one, old boy. How is he ? And I seen him. And Lamb and Flag it was at half-past one, and drat they warders and all belonging to ’em. Here’s Miss !’

Austin and Eleanor dismissed old James, and walked home together across the Park, through the gathering darkness.

They hardly spoke one word, until wending through the shrubberies they came on the lake, and then Austin spoke.

He gently and delicately laid the whole case before her, as we have made it out for him above. He laid before her the doubtfulness of her position in the world while those two people, Aunt Maria and Captain Hertford, occupied the house ; and she agreed with him in both.

“ My dearest ! ” she said, “ do you not think that I must feel all this more acutely than you ? I am not a foolish little body by any means ; I should get on well in society, and I should be immensely fond of society. Do you think that I willingly live with two such millstones round my neck as those two people ? ”

“ There is a remedy at hand,” said Austin.

“ I know it, but an impossible one.”

"If you marry me at once, you will never be plagued with them any more. I shall have authority, and will banish them. My father's old friends would flock round you, and you would take the place that your wealth and talent entitle you to."

"All this, my dearest, is mere truism. But I cannot marry you before next April twelvemonth, Austin."

"Now why not, my own?"

"Ah! there you must trust me, my Austin. There is a skeleton in our cupboard. You are going into public life, and I am going with you; you will win a peerage, perhaps—at all events, be prominently before the world. We must have the road quite clear before we start our coach."

"And am I not to know what this skeleton is?"

"Certainly not, until I tell you. It must not be said that we married while such and such was the case. If it be possible, I would rather that you never knew."

"But others know."

"We can buy them. You always knew that there were queer stories about the Hiltons. You have heard the stories about my father, you know all about

my poor brother, you know about Aunt Maria. You love me, my Austin ; I have great wealth, which is all your own, and with which you must make your way in the world. There are scandals about our family which must be smothered. Until they are smothered and the road is clear, it would be fatal to your prospects for us to marry. I am at work day and night with you only in my thoughts, God knows, my darling ! to clear the way for you towards honour and fame. I am working for you, Austin, like a patient little mole, so diligently and slyly. If you claim my promise next spring, I will at all events lay all the facts before you, and you shall say whether you will have me or no."

" You will not tell me now ? "

" No. It may happen that you may never know. On that wild chance, I keep you in the dark. But still, if you demand, before you marry me, an account of everything, I shall have to give it you. At present, your happiness and mine is, as far as I see, bound up in your trusting implicitly to me. Will you trust me, Austin ? "

" I will trust you implicitly, my own Eleanor," he answered slowly, looking down into her eyes—who would not have trusted those patient, quiet eyes?

—“for I will trust you implicitly. I were a dog else, I think.”

“Mind one thing, Austin; keep near me, let me see you continually. Never forget what I told you before. She can scold me and frighten me into submission at times.”

“Cannot you get rid of her?”

“No. She would create a scandal when I want all things quiet. You must do that—*you* must get rid of her.”

CHAPTER XXII.

ALTHOUGH Austin resolved to trust Eleanor most fully and entirely, yet, if we said that he was altogether satisfied and pleased, we should be saying that he was something more or less than human. He *was* a little, ever so little, nettled, and it was a trial to him, that that great coarse-faced brutal bully should be always in her house, and, moreover, should know of things which he might not. He hated Captain Hertford worse than ever; he hated Aunt Maria worse than ever; but, nevertheless, he felt sure that in a worldly point of view Eleanor was right. The Hiltons *were* a queer family. If there was, as Eleanor said there was, something wrong, still it was better that matters should be let down easy, and the road cleared before they started. He determined to trust Eleanor implicitly.

It must not be supposed that Austin had come to this resolution without assistance. After the conversation detailed in the last chapter, he had sat in his room for an hour or more, and had found himself getting peevish, almost for the first time in his life; had begun to feel—dreadful thought! that he was being fooled. Men like him; men who have never been tried, and have looked only at the surface of things; men who believe only in the words which represent things, and have no actual knowledge of the things they represent, are more apt to be jealous and suspicious than those who have had their noses actually to the grindstone; and know from experience what good faith and falsehood, trust and mistrust, really mean.

He was in a fair way to get jealous; when there was a bounding foot on the stairs—dog Robin leapt up and barked joyously, and the next minute Lord Charles burst into the room, crying—

“Come, come, laggard! to the House! Stafford O’Brien is on his legs, and there is all sorts of fun in the wind!”

Austin came at once. On their walk from Austin’s lodgings in Pall Mall, he had told his friend everything; and under the influence of his friend’s

affectionate shrewdness, all the mists had cleared away ; and by the time he had left his friend, and had squeezed into a tolerable place in the gallery, he was himself again prepared to enjoy the noble sport which was going on in the arena below.

Lord Brooke was speaking, but the people in the gallery were whispering to one another about Lord Granby's speech, which seemed to have been telling. Before Austin could hear anything of it, Lord Brooke sat down, and Lord Worsley rose. He made some terribly hard hitting. When Austin heard his quotations from old speeches of Sir Robert Peel's and Sir James Graham's, terribly telling as they were, he certainly, mad Peelite as he was, *did* wish that they had never been uttered ; and he also wished, most piously, that the noble Baron was on board his yacht, or at Appuldercombe, or anywhere, save in that House, quoting those confounded old speeches.

Yet these attacks on his hero made him somewhat angry. Of course they were easily answered, but it was very provoking, to have to eat one's words in a laughing house. Austin began to grow warm with the rest of the world, and left Eleanor pretty much to herself for a week.

On the thirteenth he bethought him that he would have a joke with her, so he sportively sent her a valentine, and on Saturday morning, the fourteenth, he went to visit her, intent on hearing the fate of the valentine he had sent her. The door was opened by old James, who said, "Hush!"

Austin asked what was the matter.

"Did you ever hear she when she was carrying on?" asked the old man; "listen to her now!"

Aunt Maria's voice was sadly audible indeed; hoarse, loud and irregular, coming from the drawing-room; Austin muttered something between his teeth, and went quickly upstairs.

He opened the door, and she ceased when she saw him. She looked very red and wild, and Eleanor sat opposite to her, with her hands folded in her lap, perfectly patient, and careless of what the old woman might say. The old woman had evidently been scolding her hardest at her. As Austin came in, Aunt Maria held her tongue, and Eleanor looked up and smiled; but Austin, being her lover, could see what others perhaps could not. He had previously once or twice, found her in a state of depression after one of Aunt Maria's scoldings, but on these occasions she had always been herself again immediately: on

this occasion such was not the case. She looked up at him and smiled, but Austin could see that she was not herself; that she looked wan, and pale, and anxious—strange to say, Austin thought he had never seen her look so handsome before.

He could not help wondering what Aunt Maria's ingenuity had found to say, so very disagreeable as to disturb Eleanor's equanimity: but in spite of thinking about this, he could not also help thinking how very handsome Eleanor looked. She was sitting opposite her Aunt, and was dressed for walking, with the exception of her bonnet, which lay on the floor beside her. She wore the long grey cloak which ladies wore just then, which covered everything; her chin, after her first look at him, had dropped once more on her breast, and her hands were folded in her lap before her, with quiet patience: and the dull grey colour of her habit, and its almost foldless simplicity, harmonised so amazingly well with the dull patience of her face, that she formed a picture, and a study of quiet endurance, which made Austin think he had never in his life seen any one so beautiful.

Aunt Maria was in a blind fury at something. She rose and left the room without looking at Austin.

"Has she been scolding you, my own?" asked Austin, bending over Eleanor and kissing her.

"Yes, Austin. Where does she learn it all? Where has she lived? What has she done? Austin, dear, take me to church."

"Let us come."

"Aye! That is good of you," she said. "If it was not for the church I should die under it all. They should leave the churches open as they do abroad. Come on; we shall be in time. Sometimes, Austin, when she is like that, I get away and go over to the church and find it shut, and then—ah! then—you don't know what it is, my own."

"I don't know," said Austin; "but if it distresses you, my love, I can be sorry. I don't like going to church. You must teach me to like it."

"I will. Austin, should you be very angry if I were to join the Romish Church?"

"I! Angry! No. I should not be angry. You would find it a mistake, though. It won't hold water."

"Will the English Church hold water?" said Eleanor.

"Why, yes, distinctly so. But what on earth do you want to subscribe to the whole business for?

Surely you get as much or more at St. Paul's as you do in Cadogan Street. Have you ever been there?"

"Yes."

"I wouldn't go again. I don't think you have thought much about it. You don't know how much you subscribe to. Have you been there often?"

"Yes."

"Don't go again. I don't like your going there. Did Edward Barty take you there?"

"No; I went there by myself. I tried to get him to go, but he got angry."

"He was quite right. Why did you go?"

"Because it always stands open. And if you were a woman, and had Aunt Maria to live with you, and a bitter trouble, which you can't tell to the love of your heart; you, Austin, would be glad to slip away sometimes and get into the quiet church, and kneel, and forget it all."

"It may be so," said Austin. "Meanwhile, you must pray for me. Here we are at the church-door. I wish we might sit together."

"We may pray together," said she. "Austin, will you come to the Abbey with me to-morrow morning?"

"Surely I will," said he. And they went into

church, he to one place and she to another, as is the custom in some churches. When he met her again at the church-door she was still anxious and silent, and seemed to have a different expression on her face, to any Austin had seen before.

On the pleasant Sunday morning he came to take her to the Abbey. The look of yesterday had deepened. She looked very worn and anxious, and he was much distressed. The morning was a bright, slightly frosty one, and the sun streamed into the old Abbey through the south-eastern windows and fell upon the beautiful young pair of lovers as they sat together. Eleanor was absorbed in her prayers, but Austin was vacantly watching the lines of light in the thick atmosphere—how they shifted and crossed one another as the sun went westward—was wondering how the deuce those old monks got it into their heads to build such a beautiful place, and why the fellows of the present day could not, in that respect, hold a candle to the men of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. He thought of these things in a vague, ruminant, ox-like frame of mind, instead of attending to his prayers; with about as much earnestness as a fly in the sunshine; and very nearly determined to ask some one about it.

Possibly he might have asked some one, some day ; but they had to stand up at this point of his cogitations, and the mere act of standing up, set him thinking about the Bill, and what an awful sell it would be for Lord Lincoln, if Hilyard were to beat him for South Notts. He went on thinking about the chances at Newark long after they sat down again. He was actually smiling at the thought of the Duke's anger against the renegade, and thinking how much better it would be, if the Duke would keep his god-like rage penned in his own bosom, when he felt Eleanor's hand on his arm.

He had been very inattentive, and he blushed and looked down on the Prayer-book which lay open between them. Her finger was on the very passage in the Litany which the priest was intoning at that instant—we humbly venture to think, one of the most sublime pieces of uninspired prayer, put up by man to his God !—

“ That it may please thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water; all women labouring of child; all sick persons and young children; and to show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives.”

Those who do not appreciate fully that passage in the Litany, had better hear it read out by the captain

in latitude sixty south, when the sea is thundering and booming, and the ship is reeling and rolling, and the wind is screaming, and the cruel icebergs are gleaming, half-seen, in the snow-fog, and the horrid long night is settling down over the raging ocean. They will find out what “travelling by land or water” means then, I’ll warrant them. The time came when Austin realized one part of this glorious prayer ; and not the part by any means that he ever dreamt of realizing ; and when he did so he remembered, that, as soon as this one paragraph in the Litany was finished, Eleanor removed her hand from his arm once more, and went on with her devotions ; and that he began to think how quietly Lord Henry Lennox had got in for Chichester ; and of the meeting of the labourers in Wiltshire, and what a strange business that was ; and of Lucy Simkins’ speech and Mary Ferris’ speech.

And of Lord Charles Barty’s furious blind rage when he read those speeches aloud ; and how, when he had come to the passage, “I biled they challucks for my children, and the neighbours said they was poison ; and I says, then, they’d better die with a full belly than a empty one ;” that young nobleman had rushed up and down the room crying out for

free-trade or revolution. And so, feeding his soul on his own indignation against the protectionists, Austin, not regarding the service, went on until he was nearly as furious as Lord Charles himself. And, all the time, quiet, patient Eleanor was sitting at his side, leaning ever so slightly against him. She, too, had within her causes, deep enough, of anger and indignation, deeper possibly than Austin's indignation on account of the Wiltshire labourers, and his anger against the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Miles. But the mere feeling of her lover's shoulder against her own made her quiet and contented ; and although the cloud on her face grew darker and darker, as time went on, yet still, though her face was pinched and anxious, she was happy. She would have sat there, leaning against his shoulder, and have died as she sat, with perfect contentment. When the sermon was over, and they rose up, she took up her burden once more, and carried it.

"My Eleanor," said Austin, as they walked home, "you are looking worn and anxious."

"I am, Austin. To-morrow afternoon I shall be myself again."

"Shall I come to you to-morrow morning?"

"No. To-morrow is penance day. You have

often laughed at me as a Tractarian, dear Austin. I do penance once a month."

"What kind of penance?" said he, trying a harmless joke.

"A pilgrimage, Austin."

"Whither?"

"You must not know. You must not follow."

"I will not follow, if you give the order," said he.

"Then I give it," said Eleanor.

Austin was quite contented. In the first place he had thorough confidence in Eleanor, and had a shrewd suspicion that it was best not to know too much about the Hilton family history; in the next, there were affairs to the fore, which engaged his attention more than the easy confidential courtship to which he had committed himself. This was the spring of 1846. All England had gone politically mad, and Austin among the rest. His father had always placed political success before him, as the great object on this side of the grave, while he had spoken with truly ministerial reserve about success on the other. Old Mr. Elliot had been very anxious to make Austin ambitious, and Austin had refused to be made ambitious; but had gone about about, with

his hands in his breeches pockets, laughing at the whole business, until ——

Well, until this year, 1846. Ever since he was a child, he had read about great political struggles, just as we used to read about the old European wars, until the Crimean campaign came upon us, and turned all the familiar printed words about the deeds of our fathers, into letters of blood ; which we eagerly compared with those which told of the deeds of our brothers ; and the history of war became once more a terrible reality.

Austin had thought that great political earthquakes had come to an end in 1831 ; that polities were certainly the occupation of a gentleman, but were not likely to be very interesting, because there was no question, nor was there likely to be one. Sir Robert Peel's statement in January undeceived him. The change of opinion of three of the first men in the country, showed him that there was sport a-field ; and, after the first leonine roar of the Duke of Richmond, he began to go mad with the rest.

And in this manner the leaven of political ambition, which his father had so carefully worked into him, had begun to act with a vengeance. And so, just at the time we speak of, his courtship of

Eleanor, his attention to her affairs, his jealousy of Hertford, and his distrust of Aunt Maria, were quite secondary objects: had his jealousy been excited before, so much as to make him extort an explanation from Eleanor, it would have been better for them both.

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